

Practitioner's Statement

Lineage

Matthew Ricci

My triptych, titled 'Lineage', seeks to challenge the viewer about their feelings towards death and the impact on one's life. I developed the idea of figurative distortion and the effect it has on a viewer's perception of the subject. Artists, Francis Bacon and Pablo Picasso discovered new ways to convey figure through the manipulation of perspective and simplified shape. I attempted to apply these techniques to my own painting style using, implied lines, geometric and organic shapes, arbitrary colour schemes, impasto and layered painting techniques. This evokes a sense of disconnection and loss between the subjects within my triptych.

After a visit to the Art Gallery of South Australia, I saw first hand Francis Bacon's 'Portrait No 8'. I was instantly attracted to his dominant and unique painting method and compositional style. This led me down a path of investigation, where I discovered his ambitious triptych 'Three Studies of Lucian Freud'. This became a starting point for my visual thinking and inspiration throughout my creative journey.

I feel I was successful in using the elements and principles of design based on my investigation of artists Francis Bacon, Eadweard Muybridge, Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse. I felt my colour palette was appropriate in conveying the sombre emotional connection I have with the subjects. This emotion was felt as my Nonna, who was the subject of the third panel, passed away suddenly, at the time I was working on her painting. This emotional experience made these artworks more powerful and meaningful to me. The foreground and background were composed of a secondary and neutral colour scheme, namely orange, olive green and black. Inspiration for using this colour palette came from Bacon's 'Three Figures At the Base of Crucifixion' triptych.

A triptych is traditionally a Catholic motif. Bacon was influenced by religious art. My Nonna was a devout Catholic, as am I. As a result the idea of encapsulating the subject into a religious symbol seemed fitting.

The black rectangles symbolise the loss of my Nonna. I wanted to represent my loss in my artworks. I felt that by having the black rectangles completely engulfing Mum and myself I could convey the 'black hole' that her loss has left in our hearts. I decided to place my Mum and myself on larger canvases (120 x 160cm and 120 x 180cm) and have our figures set back from the foreground to show a sense of the removal we now have from my Nonna. This removal is emphasised by the implied perspective that is created from the sloping foreground on the first and second canvases, towards Nonna.

I feel my bold and confident brushstrokes convey my development as an artist. This personal philosophy was used in my painting. I made sure to use energetic brushstrokes, especially when painting warmer hues such as red to create focal points within the artworks. I feel I was successful in achieving asymmetrical balance between the three panels. I feel this helps create intrigue to the viewer.