

Practitioner's Statement

Untitled

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I began this journey looking at flora and fauna but I also had an idea of expressing human emotion in some way. Moving onto portraiture I found artist José Romussi who combined black and white photography with embroidered flowers.

I went on to explore at which incorporated flowers looking at the realistic style of the Baroque period and the obvious brushstrokes of the Impressionists. Using acrylics I tried to achieve the dappled brushstrokes of Renoir and also experimented with flower collage and photography.

I was very drawn towards the concept of doing a portrait with a narrative and explored examples created by Jen Mann. Mann works with facial expressions and saturates her compositions with limited hues to create a mood. Another artist Jenny Morgan however incorporated a larger range of colours and introduced hand gestures which added an emotional content.

I liked concept of achieving realism so I set out to take some photos of a friend. I wanted a relaxed posture and to use as much of the body as possible to create language that would engage the viewer. I arranged him bare chested and sitting with his arms in his lap. Using a lamp enabled me to capture tonal qualities. I went on to practice my painting skills in my folder.

At this point I had a photograph that I wanted to use but compositionally it was lacking in something. Continuing my research I found some images where people were breaking through a wall of paper. Taking more photos of torn paper this time, I decided I would incorporate this onto the bare torso. I thought of using flowers coming from the torn paper and present this as a symbol of him disclosing his feelings to the viewer.

When working on my final composition I became aware that there was a void above his head. I played around with drawings of flowers growing above but felt they would distract from the main image. Looking for something smaller and a contrast I decided to use insects and a monstera branch. I felt this also added some visual interest to the composition.

For the painting process I decided to use José Romussi's approach and limit the colour's on my figure to black and white. The colour's in the foliage and the insects would create a contrast. Once I drafted the composition, I began the painting process. While I had some experience in acrylics, I had to continue developing my skills in order to create a realistic style with soft gentle tonal gradation. I found by layering over the existing paint I was learning the technique as I went. The harder bristles allowed me to dry brush and create the softer treatment of colours.

Finally, I am pleased with the end result. My painting is almost surreal in nature and the flowers coming out of the central figure are very effective at attracting the viewer's eye and supporting the narrative that I have created. The coloured flowers and insects frame the image and create a balance to the overall composition