

Practitioner's Statement

Ella

Charlotte Tatton

For my first major practical, I began with the idea of wanting to paint a portrait. Previously, my chosen medium was watercolour however I wanted to explore oil paint despite my lack of experience. This was a risk as the paint is difficult to manipulate and hard to work with. However, research was conducted into oil painters which helped me understand that for my final I had to consider elements such as colour, realism and application.

With an existing love for vintage fashion and interior design, I wanted to incorporate this within my piece. I found that the 70's era interested me the most, with the "flower power" wallpaper, round sunglasses and the influx of feminist acts and movements. I began sketching iconic symbols of the decade to practice my technique with oils. These pieces were ill blended and didn't embody the realistic look I was hoping for, making me question my chosen media. An opportunity arose which meant I was able to go to a realistic oil painting workshop where I learnt the 'alla prima' technique from contemporary artist, Ruby Chew, which drastically improved my painting skills.

My piece was highly influenced by Ruby Chew for her medium, technique and composition. For the workshop that I attended, I made the subject matter central which is a technique Chew implements in her art also. I believed it made the canvas look balanced, allowing the main focal point to be the realistic face. I worked from a reference image, which was used to mix colours with a strong relationships and to ensure the paint was modelled appropriately to create realism. I took a blended approach to the skin rather than painterly as I found I like to be controlled to create a neat and airbrushed look.

The portrait is of my friend who lives in England. I have known her for 12 years but haven't seen her since moving to Australia in 2014. I found it hard going from spending everyday with her to only speaking through text and Skype. Being restricted to communicating through such social media means I have missed out on experiences she has been through. She has always supported my art and has been the subject matter for other projects. We are similar in that, she also like the 70's era and always wears vintage and second hand clothing. Another artists who I was inspired by, Kris Knight also paints portraits of his friends to express the idea of identity. I believe through my final practical I was able to capture Ella's personality through her nose ring, long hair and signature flannel shirt.

I wanted my piece to communicate the idea of nostalgia, long distance friendships and history in the form of interior design which is evident in the background of the piece. For the background, I used pastel blue and green to create a, floral background. This was inspired by Ruby Chew and was intended to create juxtaposition against the flat colours and the realistic portrait, drawing the viewer's eye through the composition and into a different world.