

## Practitioner's Statement

### ***True Colours***

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The theme of my body of work is escaping reality and revisiting childhood, and I wanted my work to remind people of their past childish wishes. I'm currently in a position in my life where I'm expected to grow up and find a career, which is a stressful and scary time. I think this is why I found myself revisiting some favourite books from my childhood as they reminded me that I used to believe that stuffed animals could talk and fairies lived in our garden.

I became interested in fairy-tales from my childhood such as *Winnie the Pooh* and *Angelina the Ballerina* and I began experimenting with the different mediums used by those artists. I found E.H Shepard's technique of ink and watercolour refreshing and I enjoyed recreating some of his illustrations. While experimenting with Shepard's technique, I came across the artist Nuria Salcedo who uses coffee as a medium and instantly fell in love with her work. I experimented with this media and found that I love the texture coffee creates and the vintaged and aged look it produces. This led me to have the idea for my first practical piece, a series of the two portraits portraying what my two friends wanted to be when they were younger, compared to what they are actually going to pursue after year 12. The coffee represents them and their dreams ageing. I combined brown pencil with the instant coffee as it enhanced the contrast by forming darker tones and developing the detail in the faces. While continuing with my coffee finals, I began to design and create my other practical pieces, as my favoured method of working is switching between a variety of work at the same time.

Whilst researching further, I was greatly inspired by Joshua Milies, he captures his subject's emotions with vibrant colour and I found this captivating as part of growing up is about connecting with all your emotions and experiences. I believe that his technique of painting vibrant colours in thick paint is an original way of displaying this. Therefore, after experimenting in his style with basic elements such as brush stroke direction, line, texture, colour tones and working with a pallet knife, I found I prefer working with a paintbrush. I decided to incorporate this technique into another of my practical pieces, painting a self-portrait and individual works of my family members. I created a series of four pieces depicting family members, using dramatic lighting and composition arranged from an unusual angle. I drew them up first, working from dark tones to light with small brush strokes. It was a challenge achieving the shadows and highlights due to the non-realistic vibrant colour palette, however, with practice I got the hang of it. I used the symbolic representation of emotional ties I have with my family as the main theme and the pieces focused on each of their 'hidden' emotions individually, with the colour palette changing depending on their age. I did however, used the colour green as a recurring symbol throughout all of the portraits, it being more obvious in my sister's portraits and mine as it represents our youth. I made it less visible in my parent's paintings as it shows that they have aged, growing further away from their childish dreams, however, it is still present, making them who they are.

I continued to follow the connection between my mother and myself and how her childhood influenced mine; I discovered that we both share the same love for the novel *Alice in Wonderland* and that led me to my next practical piece. I wanted to take the story of *Alice* and twist it to fit my reality, basing my sculpture on an illustration in the book where *Alice* is overwhelmed by the cards. To me this symbolises reality catching up with her as she wakes up. I wanted to twist this; being a year 12 student, I don't want reality to catch up with me, I would much rather dive back into my childhood to escape. I therefore, based my *Alice* sculpture on me; she has curly hair and is swiftly escaping reality. Imagination is taking over, this is represented through the wave of cards and her skin being made out of the *Famous Five* novel implying the need for an adventure as she crashes into reality. To form this sculpture I used a variety of skills and materials, which led to me exploring so many new techniques. For example; I learnt how to use the software CAD and sticker machine to make the symbols on the cards, I also used a number of different wood tech machines such as the electric sander and plastic guillotine, I made a wire skeleton for the characters and combined it with paper sculpture and finally detailed the characters with tissue paper and paint. Making this sculpture has greatly improved my ability to problem solve and has also enhanced my art making skills.

This idea of imagination becoming modern day reality, led me into my fairy themed artworks and I wanted to show fairies in reality. I became fascinated with the impact of fast foods on society, such as MacDonal'd's in America and how it has infiltrated the lives of children. Therefore, I began exploring this concept and combined it with my stained glass on Perspex experimentation. I discovered that glass paint was limiting in colour and tonal range so I decided to combine it with ink. This allowed me to create interesting textures and colours on the Perspex. It was crucial to position each element correctly to achieve the depth between the painted Perspex layers. To enable this effect to work I learnt how to use a router that engraved a piece of wood so the paintings could stand, slotted in, behind each other.

I continued this theme and decided to make a sculpture using packaging from McDonalds. After experimenting with wire, I decided to combine it with thread creating the body of the fairies and the wings. I also used fake flower petals to make the different skirts. These fairies were surprisingly time consuming to make because of their size and fiddly detail, but I loved their overall effect.

Overall I am happy with my body of artwork. I believe the viewer is reminded of their childhood and becomes lost in their imagination when they look at it. Each element I have included I not only found extremely enjoyable but has enabled me to enhance my technical skills and concept of art.