

Practitioner's Statement

Riding through Life

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My personal experiences, challenges and opportunities that life has presented to me have shaped who I am as a person. This has inspired me to create my body of work, "*Riding through Life*". I studied the work of historical Fauvist artist Franz Marc and contemporary artist Louise Terrier throughout my Folio. This opened my mind to new styles and media in painting. Throughout the year I enjoyed the journey of experimentation. I decided to create two pieces in two dimension and one sculpture. I produced one painting in oils and one in water colour. After studying Franz Marc and cubism I was inspired to venture into the style of cubism with my oil painting. The oil painting reflects the inspiration of Fauvist colours as I learnt how to interpret cubism looking at the later work of Franz Marc. I chose to paint my horse Pheobe, as horses are personally relevant in my life. This is because I have been riding since I was five. Franz Marc also painted horses which made me more interested in studying his work. He used colour psychology and symbolism to create meaning in his pieces. This has encouraged me to do the same with my body of work. Louise Terrier inspired me to use my previous skills in water colour with a different, almost expressionist, approach in style. She is an artist who chooses to paint horses and other animals in contemporary ways with splashes. I was drawn to her work and I experimented with her techniques. I painted a very different picture of my horse Pheobe in the Louise Terrier style, striving to achieve movement and freedom within the painting. In this painting I wanted to achieve a more contemporary style with splashes of paint. I have incorporated Franz Marc's symbolism in colour and style to create a different meaning in my water colour painting. My third piece in my body of work was inspired by George Segal, Auguste Rodin and Antony Gormley whom I studied in my Visual Study. I wanted to learn from these masters of sculpture and experiment with their media and techniques. This has given me the idea to create a modroc sculpture. This sculpture represents myself and how my outlook on life, has changed and made it better.

My first painting of Pheobe in the cubistic style shows her life and how it has changed. She has show jumping bloodlines and has converted into the dressage discipline. This is shown from the red and white jump behind her and the dressage arena ahead of her. This is a representation of my life and how I had previously planned out and structured every aspect of it. I wanted every part of my plan to fit together perfectly like a puzzle, as shown by the cubistic style of painting. This, however, is not how life works. We must rather run or *ride* at and work for new opportunities, even failures, if we want to truly succeed. My second painting using water colour is of Pheobe running forward, leaving splashes behind her. This painting represents myself running at new amazing experiences and opportunities that I would not have had if I'd stuck to my rigid life plan. The splashes represent the effect I have had on other people like my family and friends while chasing these dreams. My sculpture is of myself and how I have used opportunities to change my life for the better. These opportunities have allowed me to win the Grand National award, therefore becoming one of the best horse riders in Australasia, a lifelong goal of mine. This success is represented in the garland held by the sculpture. The roses within the garland are made from individual ribbons previously won while competing in horse riding.

These roses represent the lessons I have taken from my past successes, failures and challenging times in my riding career and how they have all contributed to this one big success. You must learn to lose before you can win. The sculpture is in plain white, like George Segal's sculptures, to clearly portray that I am only an ordinary girl, yet the way I see my opportunities is what has made my goals become reality.

Some difficulties I experienced whilst completing the oil painting was to achieve the cubism style. I combated this by analyzing more cubism artists like Pablo Picasso which allowed me to find my own contemporary style. I also found it quite difficult to modroc myself as the wet plaster kept slipping off. This is why I only used modroc on my face and front. I made the other body parts using my friends as models.

Some improvements I made to my sculpture artwork was the use of texture paste rather than plaster of Paris. As I wanted a very smooth porcelain-like surfaced sculpture I chose to paint it with tile paint. To do this, I experimented smoothing the modroc then applying plaster of Paris. This was rather difficult as the plaster of Paris would dry very quickly. I therefore chose to experiment with texture paste, something my chosen sculpture artists had not done. This worked exceptionally well as the paste was able to be applied thick or watered down when necessary. I also improved the sculpture by remaking the hands so they would hold the garland, rather than it just balancing. This changed the whole appearance of the sculpture and made my figure more lifelike, which was my aim.

Overall I am satisfied with my body of work, "*Riding through Life*". I feel I have incorporated what I have learnt from the artists I studied this year whilst still experimenting and finding personal meaning. I have also taken what I have learnt previously from using water colour and developed new styles and techniques. I am pleased with my experimentation and execution of new media like oil paints, modroc, plaster of Paris, texture paste and tile paint. Those media, including two and three dimensional, were very different to those I had previously worked with and I have therefore extended my practical application.