

Self Portrait

Jaswant Bhara

For my second Major I wanted to create an artwork that reflected the influences that I have gained throughout this year. These influences included Kline, Pollock, Gordon Bennett, Imants Tillers, Banksy and most importantly Basquiat. Initially, I was unsure how I wanted my second major to look and I was hesitant to start. I was fortunate to find the work of Gordon Bennett, an artist who was influenced by his identity and the abuse he received throughout his life. It was through Bennett's painting, 'But I Always Wanted To Be One Of The Good Guys' that I appropriated the words "I Am" and included "MAI" in my painting. (MAI translates to I Am in Punjabi). I found that he appropriated many artists, including artists that I have been focusing on throughout the year such as Basquiat and Pollock. This was seen through artworks such as 'Possession Island 1991' and 'Abstraction'. The idea of using multiple canvases was through Gordon Bennett where he appropriated Imants Tillers, an artist that uses multiple canvases to portray an image that consists of many groups. I instantly loved this multi canvas concept and decided to use this method for my second major.

I then started to appropriate some of Tillers artworks such as 'Nature Speaks: AT' and 'Hiatus'. By studying these artists in my folio, I practiced and learnt many techniques, as well as gaining skills relating to the various ways to apply paint. From Basquiat's 'Cabeza' and Kline's 'Blueberry Eyes', I learnt the expressive nature of free-flowing hand movement when painting. From Bennett I learnt the multiple ways to place identity onto a canvas. From Tiller's 'IZKLIEDE' I discovered the effectiveness of using multiple canvases and the story or meaning the separate groups can create. From Pollock's 'Blue Poles' I learnt how to put emotion onto the canvas, and From Banksy's 'Balloon Girl' I recognized how powerful the use of stencils can impact the final interpretation of the artwork.

My painting has an expressionist style background that has been assembled from the many test paintings I created whilst imitating the painting styles of the artist I studied. I found that my carefree approach when making the tests were better than when it came time for me to actually paint on the final work. The background contains spray paint, stencils and acrylic paint. On top of the background, it is clear that I have shown the styles of Pollock, Banksy, Basquiat, Imants Tillers, Gordon Bennett and Kline. Through the study of these artists I have been able to learn and show multiple applications of applying paint along with the meaning and symbolism that it carries. An example of this is the stencilled word 'SIKH' at the bottom of my painting. The lone stencil maintains a 'soft' look, easing the intensity of the entire artwork and capturing the identity theme. I am happy with the final painting as it expresses the ideas of my identity and my religion. I believe my work has developed and matured through my study of the contemporary artists I researched.