

Haji Lane

Belle Black

The broad theme of 'Singapore' could have led to indecision for the final piece, however, the many directions I could have taken inspired me to research further into the topic. I decided to create a mural for the final piece after initiating this research. The majority of my inquiries led to photographs of Singapore's famous street walls covered in large, beautiful artworks. I was instantly inspired by these designs and kept the idea of a mural in mind while creating experiments. Other inspiration stemmed from the photographs I took of the intricate architecture littered around Singapore, various cultural influences and experiences during my travels with my family. The name of my piece, Haji Lane, is the lane in Singapore where I took most of my inspiration photos. All the colours and styles of the different murals created by artists was very inspiring.

The abstract, traditional style of Ika Sarkasi allowed me to study the cultural art technique of batik. I am very grateful for this experience and appreciate the beautiful technique of the art form. While I did not use this technique for my final, it did open my eyes to the unique forms of art there are in different cultures. Speak Cryptic's monochromatic colour scheme and unique style inspired me while creating the final. His work incorporates intricate patterns and a grunge style; this combination is dynamic and visually appealing. Moreover, Danielle Tay's artistic approach to creating artworks with layered watercolour shapes is simple and effective. Similarly, MessyMsxi utilises her simple cartoonish style of vibrant colours and silhouette shapes to attract the eye to her mystical lands. I was heavily inspired by her style in my final, utilising fluorescent colours in various abstract, unconventional shapes. The first experiment focused on intricate designs of Singapore's colonial architecture. I appreciate the detailed painting skills I learnt from this experiment; they were later utilised while painting the mural. The second experiment allowed the use of unfamiliar mediums which was enlightening. The third experiment influenced the final artwork; the organic style and free movement of the lines inspired me to use abstract shapes. Lastly, the fourth experiment allowed me to experience a new style I had never attempted before, Surrealism. The use of unconventional shapes for facial features influenced me to use unconventional shapes to create elements in my final.

I wanted my final piece to be interpreted by each person differently, however, I did make some artistic decisions intentionally to symbolise certain aspects within my topic of Singapore. The contrast between modern and traditional Singapore was very present in my travels. Singapore has incorporated each of these features seamlessly in their ever-evolving city. To showcase this in the mural, I placed roof shingles in the bottom left hand corner and harsh angular lines above them to symbolise conventional and modern features. These bold shapes work together harmoniously and also have a strong message. Moreover, the contrasting elements of man-made structures and the natural environment are a prominent feature in the city of Singapore. I decided to demonstrate this beautiful relationship in the mural with the incorporation of brightly coloured buildings and a lush, thriving forest that are co-existing together. I intentionally chose to paint the national flower of Singapore; an orchid. This symbolised the quality and essence of the flourishing country. A personal addition to the mural was the small boat in the right-hand corner. I decided to add this for two reasons, the first being that fishing is one of Singapore's main exports and largely apart of their trade system. I also included the boat as my family and I went on a boat ride along the Singapore River and Marine Bay, this was a memorable experience for me. Due to the tropical nature of the country, I experienced lightening, clouds and rainbows, which are all present in the sun's rays.

The creation of my final piece was a time-consuming process, taking six full days in total to complete. I wanted the mural to be vibrant and visually pleasing. I began the process by sketching the design onto the wall by a projector. Then I started painting each colour, one at a time, which was beneficial for saving paint and time. A problem I did experience was that some of the paints were not completely opaque, so I had to paint numerous coats, particularly the fluorescent colours. This did set me back, however, I moved onto another colour or area I had not painted yet when this occurred. Another challenge I experienced was that it was the first time I have ever painted a mural, while there were no specific problems with this I had to learn to paint on a different surface which was a new and enlightening experience.

Overall, I am satisfied with the final artwork I have created. I painted a unique piece that is very meaningful to me. While some of the lines are not straight and the paint bled, I appreciate the bright colours as it embodies the energy I experienced in Singapore. I gained knowledge in many new mediums and artforms throughout the creation of this folio. This process has also developed my understanding of how it is visually possible to combine contemporary and traditional influences into a visual artwork. I believe that I have meaningfully captured my travels to Singapore in an expressive and significant way.

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