

Ubirr Rock, Kakadu National Park

Ruby Deacon

'Ubirr Rock, Kakadu National Park' is an acrylic painting which is representative of my admiration for the rich beauty of the Australian landscape. When visiting Kakadu National Park, I was awestruck by the picturesque landscape and the golden cold fires from the summit of Ubirr Rock during sunset. This inspired me to create a painting which captured the astonishing beauty of the Australian Landscape.

Indigenous artist Albert Namatjira's landscapes with their intense hues and pigmented tones became a useful source of reference. His paintings demonstrate deep understanding of the Australian landscape through a vivid colour palette and Indigenous perspective. I aimed to capture a similar colour palette to Namatjira although using acrylic paint.

I decided to further explore the works of Indigenous artist Cedric Varcoe. As I am a non-Indigenous Australian, challenges were quick to arise as I was unable to appropriately re-create techniques and messages conveyed by Varcoe. Through a workshop in my local area led by Varcoe, I was able to work through these challenges whilst gaining a greater appreciation for Indigenous connection to country in which evoked my own sense of connection to the land.

Through the works of Jim Denevan, I was able to combine my passion for the environment with art making. Denevan focuses on the vastness and spirituality of the natural world. He creates mammoth scale graphics which demonstrate his deep mental and emotional connection to his surroundings. When trialling his method of mark making I found its ephemerality lacked impact. Therefore, I navigated towards creating a more permanent final product such as a painting. The size of his works lead me to investigate the artistic movement of Romanticism which stresses emotion, freedom and individual imagination. By enlarging the scale of my painting, I was able to not only capture the magnificence of the Ubirr Rock outlook but convey the significance of the location.

Through Fred Williams, I learnt to adapt to a new perspective of painting a landscape. Influenced by his conceptualisation of the landscape, I explored resin art as an abstract approach when creating a topographical landscape; this method enabled me to translate aspects of abstract art into my own work. The spontaneous behaviours of the media achieved flecks of yellow inspiring me to incorporate a metallic element into my final. The dappled gold paint throughout my major enhanced the breathtaking impact of the landscape that inspired me. By displaying my major on a large scale, it enabled me to capture the awe of nature as well as acknowledge the viewers subjectivity due to the romantic depiction.

Through my painting I wanted to recognise the importance of an Indigenous perspective however as I am non-indigenous it was particularly challenging to respectfully present the spiritual connection an Indigenous Australian has with the land. I hoped to adapt to new perspectives, acknowledge artists relationship with the location they are painting and successfully blur the boundaries of low-key lighting and luminous highlights which all contributed to my personal development as an artist.

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