

Proism

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This work interrogates the notions of what an artwork can be and challenges the traditional concepts of what constitutes a visual experience.

Clive Bell's book *Art*, 1914, begins with the question, 'What quality is shared by all objects that provoke our aesthetic emotions?' and he answers, with the term 'significant form'. He goes on to loosely describe this as 'when lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, [that] stir our aesthetic emotions'. It consequently shifts the focus from the painting to the artist, allowing the viewer to gain an insight into the artists' creative process rather than deriving meaning from the finished artwork alone. I aim to explore this idea in this representation.

My paintings are somewhat autobiographical; an abstracted self-portrait. My interest in human emotions and thoughts is shown through line and colour, to not only to physically depict the face but also illustrate the internal psyche. Over eleven large, unstretched canvases, the face is structured in different ways, reflecting changes in technique and emotion. On occasions, the un-primed canvas is left naked with imprints of forceful brush strokes and finger prints. The erratic streaks of multi-coloured paint over others allude to the process which formed the artwork. Other works are more complete reflecting resolution.

Working with artist, Sally Bourke helped me develop an interest in abstract portraiture. Her free application of spray paint and colour, forms portraits, drawing focus on the eyes, creating evocative and mysterious emotional states. This led me to artist, Ben Quilty. His exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia helped me better understand his use of white space and thick application of paint. Further, Quilty's captain cook series highlights that works do not need to be completed to convey meaning. Additionally, Frank Auerbach's vast quantities of paint, piling it thickly onto the canvas in an impasto manner, and often scraping up to 90% of the original application off and starting once more influenced me. 'To paint the same head over and over' Auerbach has said 'gives one a sense of pursuing an essential truth'. As well, I was inspired by 'Automatism' including artists Jackson Pollock, Willem De Kooning and Mark Rothko, who produced artworks without conscious thought. Accessing material from the unconscious mind in a spontaneous manner, using large brushes to make sweeping gestural marks became a part of my process.

Lara Merrett's utilisation of drop sheets influenced the sculptural form of my canvases that overlap, hang and drape over the top of one another. Justine Vagra follows the same principles but in photography, where the work hangs above eye level. Installing my works above eye level aims to project the importance of the process to viewers. Strengthening my work, the process of installing it can be seen in a video, alongside the completed work.

In my quest to understand the work of these artists and through experimentation, I developed my own art term, 'Proism'. Proism describes the process of creating an artwork to be evident in the final product and gives it value. I am pleased with my visual representation revealing my passion for this concept.