

Mine

Emma Gavini

Using acrylic paint and modelling paste on hessian and cardboard, I have created a self-portrait. With a mixture of brushes and spatulas, I was able to construct a textured and contemporary painting to convey my perception of portraiture and its ability to commemorate an individual. Beginning my development process by looking at the connection between life and the mind, I explored my identity both as a child and a teenager. Reflecting on my heritage, influences, family, and friends, I questioned what makes me, me? I struggled with the concept of internal growth and development; of being invisible in a sense. I could see the incredible journey I had been on throughout my life but doubted anyone else could. I felt compelled to show how I have changed and improved, but then I realised that I did not need the acknowledgment and validation of others to be proud of who I am. Artists like Picasso, Kollwitz, and Gasparini influenced me to appreciate the portrayal of self-worth and the act of being oneself without any explanation or reason.

Inspired by Italian contemporary painter Max Gasparini, I used a cardboard box as a support board and glued hessian from a potato sack to create a rendered and bumpy texture to begin painting. Distorting and making the most of the corrugated surface allowed me to express my imperfect life story. Rips, lumps, and rough patches symbolise events that have made my life interesting and real. The use of acrylic paint and modelling paste helped create layers and thick, textural strokes with scumbled tones. This provided an organic and raw dimension, as well as tactile qualities that reflect my imperfections. Picasso's 'Self Portrait at 18' 1900, uses dark tones which influenced my decision to use black and white monotone. Colours are often associated with different emotions, for example, red symbolising passion or blue melancholy. I didn't want people to automatically associate any specific emotion when they looked at my work. By using a monochromatic colour scheme, my intention is to allow the viewer to determine my emotional state. Am I happy, miserable, thoughtful or anxious? I am all of them.

Inspired by Kathe Kollwitz, 'Self-portrait' 1934, I replicated the power and authority with the confronting large size and hypnotic stare. My aim is to show that I am in charge of who I am and who I will be. The image and technique used represents me not as an object, but as a complicated, mysterious, and unique being.

In making the artwork, I found painting the nose challenging as I wrestled with rendering accurate shapes and angles.

However, I was pleased with the contrast I was able to create between the sharp white and dull blacks in the eye area. Attention is drawn to the centre of the artwork, by accentuating the deep tone and the dominant eyes, yet I found that I did not like how dark some areas were, the hair especially causing the entire artwork to appear too dark and gloomy. If I were to make changes, I would have a different hairstyle exposing less hair so that the entire artwork is not so dark.

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