

Serena Williams

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The initial concept of my piece '*Serena Williams*' was to create a portrait that represented a strong and influential female figure in today's media, inspired by the artists' Vincent Fantauzzo and Sarah McCloskey. The decision to create a portrait of someone well-known was inspired by the finalists in the Archibald prize; portraiture focussed around a specific person whom the artist deemed inspirational or significant. Williams was selected as the subject of my portraiture due to her positive role in preaching body positivity and racial equality in the world of sport. The portrait has the ability to express Williams' resilient values of humanity through her fame and recognition of the wide community. '*Serena Williams*' is aimed to identify Williams in a strong yet feminine light, while also portraying beauty and breaking the way she is perceived as masculine due to her strong athleticism.

Fantauzzo and his piece *Love Face*, a 2013 Archibald Finalist, greatly inspired my portraiture of Serena Williams; Fantauzzo stated that he decided his portraiture needed to be "honest and simple, since a face can display so much emotion", which influenced the idea of having only the image of Williams' face contrasted against a plain background. McCloskey utilises the same approach, an artist who predominantly uses coloured pencil for her work. McCloskey applies the pencil in a radiant and detailed method, her portraiture influencing the soft and realistic finish of my portrait that succeeds in emphasizing Williams' feminine facial features. Fantauzzo and McCloskey also influenced the pairing of a simple white frame for the presentation of '*Serena Williams*'.

Pastel coloured pencil was applied in the tones of Williams' complexion upon a neutral background of brown card, the application of warm browns cross-hatched and blended to achieve a smooth finish. This provided a different way than originally known to create a realistic portrait of colour without using paint, the pencil proving to be a quicker and cleaner material. Williams' key facial features are unique in appearance, strengthened and balanced with the use of darker browns in the areas of shadow and lighter tones contrasting in the areas of highlights. The use of the neutral and brown tones blended together are a good reflexion of my personal aesthetic.

The overall scale of this portrait is that it places an emphasis on the way that Serena Williams is perceived in the media and how she uses her fame to communicate her beliefs and values. I feel as though my portrayal of *Serena Williams* is a good expression of the similar values that I possess in regard to females' bodies and race.

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