

# *Memory Fades, A Fantasy Remains*

## **Natalia Norelli**

My body of work is based on the idea of memory and highlights how some moments within an individual's life are remembered more prominently than others and some become vague or forgotten.

Memory is known to be the glue that binds our mental life, the scaffolding that holds our personal history and the recalled experiences that makes it possible for us to grow and change throughout life.

My piece portrays two landscapes, a forest on the left and a cityscape on the right with a female warrior at the centre. She is a fictitious character yet in a way represents myself, facing challenges bravely and with strength. No matter where people are from they will forget, make and hold onto memories.

The warrior girl was inspired by Eiichiro Oda's manga style, as his characters live in fantasy world's which is part of the theme I wanted to create. His animations are often bold in colour and exaggerated in expression. My character is more sensitive and feminine in colours and features, however I did want her to possess some masculine qualities such as her sharp facial features, armour and metal breast plate. Her hair flows out to her surrounding environments making her eye catching and her hood suggests her mysterious nature.

The warrior's face is in colour and is elevated from the background on a round board making her a powerful focal point. Other elevated circles emerge from the wide landscape, at different heights. These circles refer to the varying clarity of different memories and how some stand out in stark colour, as though they only happened yesterday. Other memories are vague or fade into the background and become hazy or unclear. The flat background of the forest and cityscape is painted in black and white or sepia tones reminiscent of the past as well as symbolic of sadness. The brightly coloured circles are a part of the same landscape as the contrasting monotone background, yet from a distance the 'big picture' can be seen as a whole. The bright coloured circles use primary colours and highlight happy moments.

As an individual grows, they can only remember specific moments within their life, and that as they grow memories from their past slowly fade. My aim is to encourage viewers to enjoy and reflect on the importance of beauty in their past and keep it alive as one day it may fade and become unclear. This combination of fantasy characters and play on memory gives a sense of entering another world.

To finalise my artwork, I added small, hidden, but symbolic figures, which have a special meaning to me and are prominent within my memory. This concept of adding small meaningful details was taken from Toshi, as within his pieces he develops small details from memories, which had influenced him. By adding these secret elements, it allowed the piece to become more personal and nostalgic.

I was inspired by watercolour artists, in particular Manga and Anime' use of the medium as I am fascinated by this style of Japanese art and the way in which the human body is interpreted through animated drawing.

To begin I researched and experimented with watercolour, through analysing artists such as Kelogloop and Shibasaki. Both artists allowed me to explore and practice the elements of art; texture, colour, tone, shape, line, in their unique fantasy aesthetic. I took my own photos of people in poses and clothing to model the image I wanted to draw and paint then added other elements such as flowers, stars or animals to the drawing to transform the subject into a fantasy illustration. Whilst I tried to create a sense of emotion within my experiments and Practical through expression, textured brushstrokes and colours.

I enjoyed and improved my techniques through detailed studies of the Manga style of drawing. I wanted to expand my style through incorporating realism in the composition. Kelogloop's surreal portraits

allowed me to further develop the warrior character. Their techniques influenced me to place her against a dark background outlined with white fine liner highlighting all her features and emphasising Kelogsloop's distinct technique. In addition, Shibasaki inspired me to apply realism with the watercolour medium. This is seen within my background's landscape. By using Shibasaki's visible brushstroke technique called smudging, I was able to create a blurred fade, which assisted in creating an illusion about remembering an old memory. I practiced many experiments of landscapes and cityscapes in my Folio to achieve this in my final artwork.

The artist Laovaan's combination of realism and manga style assisted me in breaking down each step to correctly add details to components of the face or figure. I used many different brushstroke techniques and brush sizes in my Practical to blend and retain natural imperfections, shadows and highlights within the landscape.

Additionally, by using a white marker to outline structures it allowed them to stand out between the dark backgrounds, creating a fantasy or dream effect reinforcing the idea of memory to the viewer. The white outline was also used to highlight the focus of the piece, which is the warrior. By making the warrior stand out, it indicates to the viewers that even though time may pass, and memories may fade, you, the warrior will never forget whom you are.

There were many challenges when creating my Practical, the assemblage of the artwork and its many different layers took a lot of planning and consideration as well as gluing each elevated surface securely to the main board. I think my work conveys the fantasy element well in the character and colour contrast of varied surfaces. The image itself could have more clearly communicated the idea of memory, perhaps through depicting different scenes in each circle of the warrior's life.

The dark side of the image is in the sadness of letting go of treasured memories of the past with the coming of age and the sadness shown on the face of the warrior and the mystery of what that sadness is about.

I believe I have produced a body of work that personally expresses the significance of memory with a fantasy like representation of a young warrior woman.

#