

## *Sweets & Treats*

### **Anna Semmens**

Using oil paint, I created a realistic still life piece displaying a composition of vibrant, multi-coloured lollies and chocolate. The composition is cropped with minimal negative space present, inspired by contemporary artist Julia Ryan's pieces, including "Skittles and Chanel". My painting intends to evoke feelings of happiness and awe to the viewer through the wide colour palette used and delicious confectionery pictured.

Prior to initiating exploration for this project, I already knew I wanted to depict the subject matter of junk food, influenced by my favourite artist Julia Ryan's earlier drawings and paintings. I began researching other contemporary artists, who focus their work on food and rich colour palettes as their subject matter, such as Sarah Graham, Andy Warhol and Wayne Theabaud, to observe how they portray sweet delicacies in various styles and mediums. I found Graham's work to be most influential to my paintings, as her hyper realistic works allowed me to strive to achieve the most lifelike appearance as possible.

During the development of my final piece's composition, an idea of incorporating glass and plastic-like textures arisen, as seen from Sarah Graham's work and real life observations of toffee apples and glass cases at the Royal Adelaide Show. Although this idea was potentially successful, it was not the true vision I had for my final product.

With my product being more visual-driven than concept-based, developing my practical skills during the lead up to creating my final piece was crucial to result in a successful art work. I developed my skills through working with an extensive range of mediums and creating observation studies of diversely shaped and textured confectionery.

The juxtaposition of the varying sizes of lollies, where the large scale Kit Kat, lollipops and sour straps contrast the small scale Smarties, creates visual interest for the viewer and allows their eye to move around the painting. I developed this composition by experimenting with colour balance and contrast, as well as lighting, to form visual unity. Many complementary hues are conveniently paired together on the piece, enhancing the vibrant display of the highly saturated colours. Small, blocked sections of black paint amidst the lollies emphasise the richness and vibrancy of the hues, as well as form fundamental negative space that provides a place for the viewer's eye to rest. Highlights and shadows forms depth and tone, perceiving the subject matter as three-dimensional, where the viewer has the urge to reach out and grab the fun confectionery. The shapes depicted mainly consist of circles and squares, where curves magnify contrast against straight lines and hard edges.

I am extremely satisfied with my artwork as I achieved the amount of colour and sense of realism that I originally envisioned for myself in my final piece. During this process, efficient time management was crucial to maintain due to the extensive range of colour and detail required in my oil painting. Ultimately, I learnt that adding highlights using a white tone produces a more pristine and authentic appearance to an art work.

#