

## *The Fool*

### **Anastasia Williams**

*The Fool* was my first fully thought out conceptual artwork. For my folio, I wanted to look at redesigning a tarot card from the Major Arcana with my own interpretation of the symbolism within it and what the card represents. I chose to redesign *The Fool* as I felt most confident with its meaning, and knew I could come up with a good concept. Depicted in my painting is a Pierrot clown, from the commedia dell'arte; an early form of theatre popular in Europe between the 16th and 18th century. Commedia dell'arte was a comedy with a colourful cast of stock characters, which included Pierrot - a pantomime sad clown. He possessed a naive and foolish nature, usually being the butt of the jokes in the performances - so I believed that Pierrot would be a good representation of The Fool. I depicted him in the fetal position; symbolising the start of life and innocence, and surrounded by flowers; which enhance the motif of purity and naivety within the painting.

I researched both contemporary and classic artists when developing the final painting. Works from Frida Kahlo, of the symbolism movement, and Edward Munch, of the expressionist movement, were analysed to develop an understanding of how symbolism is used in paintings and how intense emotion could be evoked through the contortion of shapes and use of colour. Elements of the expressionist movement can be seen in my work through the bold and intense use of colour in the impasto background and stylised hands - which fade from red to blue-toned green. I also looked at the contemporary painter Pia Fries, who uses an impasto technique and unconventional tools to create texture and movement within her abstract paintings. Her influence can be seen in my background, which I painted using an acrylic impasto medium and a palette knife. I also looked briefly at Emily Smallwood, who is a contemporary portrait artist, and her use of colour in painting skin, in particular, hands. She applies a green/blue to red/purple tinted gradient to the skin - a stylistic technique which places emphasis on the hands and the structure of them.

Overall, I think I am happy with the outcome of my painting, however, I do not believe I would paint something like this again. This painting was a huge deviation from my usual style and method, and I do not feel it suits me or reflects the full capacity of my abilities. I also tried experimenting with gold leaf sheets, which did not work at all. They kept flaking off and I was unable to get it to stay on the sections I wanted it to - which were the zeros on the top and bottom of the canvas (a card quality I wanted to include in the painting). Upon reflection, I would have preferred the visual of an abstract pour background, but I believe that it would have been difficult to control the outcome and too heavy for the canvas.

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