

Pagliacci

Abbey Wood

'Pagliacci' is an emotional self-portrait that was painted for the purpose of both normalizing and conveying my inner feelings.

The original Pagliacci play heavily inspired my work, although, other artists inspired me to create this piece. The blue undertones and extensive use of colour in the face, was inspired by Wayne Theibaud. Where the bright white tones and neutral background was inspired by Édouard Manet. Hopper also sparked the idea of exploring clowns with his painting 'Soir Bleu.' Clown makeup and designs were researched before painting my face. Photography was done at home with harsh lights to create more shadow and dimension in my face. While taking photos, my arm was placed towards the bottom of the frame to balance the composition. Various paints were experimented with, oil paints seemed the most appropriate for the layered composition I was going for.

During painting I had come to the realization that the arm was in fact too long. This made me rethink the work and I wanted to fix this mistake. This was unrealistic at the time and the arm being placed there balanced the composition, which could not be changed. This mistake was let go and accepted.

'Pagliacci' is a philosophical and reflective glimpse into my inner most emotions. It explores the dark and melancholy side of myself, by painting a self-portrait rendition of Pagliacci. Pagliacci was an Italian play that shone a new light on clowns – the side where comedy becomes tragedy. This idea was explored due to my increasing interest in the human condition and psychology. I wanted to create something more personal and unique than before, that could connect with an array of audiences. I also believe it is important to be vulnerable and express yourself in a different light even if that may be negative. Normalizing these types of emotions is important in today's society, especially due to the increasing use of social media where people constantly display their 'highlight reel'.

I believe the painting turned out successfully, it was what I had envisioned and certainly conveyed the personal themes I was trying to. I learnt many new painting techniques from other artists as well as many new things about myself. This piece is very important to me, not only because of the time and effort but the message being conveyed. I hope to produce more insightful pieces like 'Pagliacci' in the future.

#