

Stage 2 Visual Arts – Art Practitioner’s Statement

‘Communal Dystopia’ By Ingrid Mowbray

Cubism is an abstract art form which evolved to reflect modernism in a world that was changing with unprecedented speed. Inadvertently, the fundamental creation of the movement parallel with my perception of contemporary society since there has been an era of Modernism that has risen through the excessive growth of social media and technology. The 24x48inch acrylic landscape, *Communal Dystopia*, deliberately presents a dark contemptuous, imagined world that challenges humanity and their obsession with the online world.

Through my initial interest in Cubism and curiosity towards dystopian films and books, I aspired to create a piece that communicated a warning to society about our phone use. Georges Seurat’s ‘A Sunday on La Grande Jatte’, inspired a landscape style that would portray my perspective of humankind against Seurat’s depiction. Artists, Albert Gleizes, Andre Lhote and Jean Metzinger, despite all practising Cubism, offered various perspectives, styles, colour and subject matter which enhanced my understanding of the art movement. I adopted Gleizes’ Cubism style as his minimal colour palette, which consisted of a series of mosaic-like geometric shapes, paralleled well with my vision of the setting. Likewise, Metzinger’s monochromatic schemes and unique combination of lines and shapes contributed to arrangements throughout the landscape. Both artists also allude elements of illusion through their composition of line and blended use of colours which induces deception, but ultimately captivates viewers. The illusionary style enhances meaning and open-ended interpretation to explore the cubist artworks, hence viewers are enticed to reflect upon the piece longer, which is what I aspired for to cement a warning of our extensive phone use.

Initially, I had developed outlines of alternative designs, ranging from city landscapes and urban parks. I decided to pursue a restaurant setting with a window so I could capture society through recognisable scenery and allow for further exploration through the distinctive foreground, middle-ground and background. However, difficultly incurred with creating diverse colour schemes, and though the monochromatic palette served purpose with deceptions that would sustain viewer attention, I applied Lhote’s vibrant colours to distinguish the features. My artist explorations resolved difficulties, as variations of analogous, complementary and monochromatic schemes were applied that incorporated neutral and earthy colours associated with dystopia. Importantly, I learnt to enrich the gloomy, antagonising temperament by applying black geometric outlines with an added dry-brush technique, inspired by Metzinger, to mute the vibrant colours.

The landscape emphasises concepts and symbols that correspond my thoughts towards the ‘unprecedented speed’ of social media. An arguable focal point is the eye, which expresses the notion of continuously being watched. Nature is also illustrated, predominately dying, to symbolise death in our society. Cloned humanoid figures also proved essential to convince the belief of a potential future where no individuality exists. This is particularly displayed through the middle-ground of a disturbing crime scene where all the clones grasp the blue-hued phones as someone bleeds out.

I believe I transferred my personal viewpoint towards society’s excessive phone use, and perhaps induced fear of the troubling world—particularly if contemporary society continues their obsession with platforms such as social media.

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