

Babushka Doll

Jordan Thomson

Figurative painting has always been a passion of mine and for this reason my intention with the final piece was to create a self-portrait on canvas using water-based oils and acrylics, conveying a narrative reflecting my past experiences and subsequent growth. I have also been intrigued by surrealist art and wished to weave this genre into my artwork.

My main influences were the artists, Marija Tiurina, Sarlis, Don Kenn, Tim Burton, Basquiat, Malcolm Leipke, June Valentine Ruppe, Rene Magritte, Del Kathryn Barton and Moon for many reasons. The application of paint and the painterly style I chose is reminiscent of Liepke, Ruppe and Magritte. The background and narrative content of my painting reflects the aesthetic sensibilities of Barton, Moon, Tiurina, Sarlis, Kenn, Burton and Basquiat.

Initially I began experimenting with a variety of mediums, including watercolour, pen, scratchboard and acrylic/oil paint. Although I enjoyed and appreciated their qualities of watercolour, the softness and translucency of the watercolours did not adequately convey the concept that I had in mind. This led me to the decision that acrylic on canvas would be best suited to my art style and the concept I was intending to convey due to the qualities of the paint, richness of colour and the ability to manipulate the medium.

Early in this process I considered including a painting of Babushka Dolls in the background of my final piece to reflect the various stages of my life journey so far, however, as I progressed, I felt it was too literal and decided to convey this idea in a more subtle way. As a narrative about my life journey, my final work includes emotional, psychological and physical experiences, indicated through symbols and signs which appear on and around the figure, the pose and appearance of the figure, the choice, the colours and the application of paint.

Each symbol, and aesthetic choice I have made carefully was considered and intentionally included to reveal to the audience experiences that have formed me. There is a story attached to the necklaces and each of the tattoos. The dark, turbulent background represents the anxiety and depression I have dealt with during my life, the surrealistic eyes symbolise the judgement I have felt during the search for my own identity. It was important to me to also portray my resilient nature and my success in overcoming the dark periods of my life through the somewhat defiant pose.

I believe I was successful in conveying the complexity of my emotional, psychological and physical self through my self-portrait, allowing the audience to consider and create their own interpretation of the symbols and signs within the work. Creating this work also allowed me to develop as a painter, my skills working with acrylics and water-based oils greatly increasing.