

Good Girls are Quiet

Lily Pearl

Throughout our lives, we as the human species obsess over the ways in which we 'think' people perceive us, finding ourselves experiencing ambiguity and selfdoubt when faced with the unrealistic and controlling nature of the patriarchal world we as women live amongst. Such concept reflects the unmasking of the human condition, in which particularly women distort their attitudes of both themselves and others to fit the mould of 'the perfect woman'. Through *Good Girls are Quiet* (76 x 51 cm), I looked to portray the overwhelming feeling of self-doubt when faced with society's unrealistic and patriarchal expectations of women, and the powerful influence over which we act, look, and speak.

I was predisposed to analyse toxic femininity and its consequences after reflecting on the greater concept of 'the human condition' through portraiture. Rendered with acrylic paints to produce a hyper-realistic visual, the immense rendering of a woman forced to play society's play doll upon the respective unadorned background provokes and absorbs any onlooker through the minimalistic yet surrealistic expression of the human condition. The idiosyncratic artwork encompasses surrealism and ominousness through the illogical and meticulous placement of the arms and hands of society, symbolic of humanity's hold over women, and the intense eye contact made between the individual and the audience, creating a physical connection and pull of the audience to become reminiscent of society's prospects and supremacy over women. Greatly influenced by artists Mayro Toyo, Agnes Toth and Lorna Simpson, I decided to explore both surrealist figurative oeuvre, and portraiture. Moved by the inimitable panache of his paintings and illustrations, I was inspired by Toyo to incorporate realism into my final piece, but with a hint of individuality and symbolic eeriness into my personal work.

The abundant meticulousness, diminutive details and free-spirited designs amalgamated within his portraits create an atmospheric chef-d'oeuvre which no person could ignore, with all works allegorically conceptualising the human condition. Furthermore, artists Agnes Toth engrosses her audience in an unconventional manner, portraying a motif representing the unmasking of human fragility and the feeling of crumbling under pressure in which significantly influenced my concept. Finally, Simpson's conceptual works in which convey feminine stereotypes, and the unjust expectations and consequences women must live with never cease to provoke an emotive connection with her audience and confront the injustice women are subjected too.

Through profound inquiry of each artist, I was engrossed to apply a comparable expanse of not just visible detail, but also retrospective and psychologically driven detail into my portrait. As everyday passes, we become so swept up in the pressure and judgement of society and life that we neglect living life as your own self. Both the surreal figurative representation and portraiture, form a symbolic relationship with the overwhelming pressure society holds over women.

As we grow, the expectations against ourselves as women never cease, yet we can choose to empower each other to overcome society's patriarchal ways, as behind every successful woman is a tribe of other women who have each other's backs.