

## *'Taraxacum Officinale Resilience'*

### **Naomi Bache**

*'Taraxacum Officinale Resilience'* is an acrylic painting on tondo wooden board of a portrait featuring an above-view of my Year 12 classmate laying in a field of weed-like grasses and dandelions. The name, inspired by the scientific name of the plant species, incorporates both the painting's meaning and the presence of the botanical subject.

I was inspired by symbolism of plants in literature, particularly Shakespearean texts, to further investigate symbolic value of weeds. Additionally, I was artistically and aesthetically challenged by techniques of tonal realism and the incorporation of weeds in artworks in collaboration with hands, such as in Jackie Liu's paintings of realistic intertwining weeds embellishing dynamic hands, commenting on a subjectivity of beauty and mortality. Also fascinated by the use of tondo canvases, I investigated Scott Hutchison's circular works involving tonally realistic interlacing hands, interacting with one another, distorting moments in time and their effect on the human form. This strengthened my conceptual incorporation of the appendage and use the 'tondo' format circular board often used in Renaissance paintings.

I painted my artwork with realistic tonal value, using round hogs-hair brushes and acrylic paints, with a combination of 'dry' and 'wet' techniques. Dry brushing was used for most of the shading and application of tonal value around the face, using medium sized brushes with little amounts of paint on the brush with circular motions. Wet-on-wet techniques were also done with hogs-hair brushes and greater amounts of paint on the brush, leaving wet paint on the wooden canvas. Blending was done by making strokes back and forth between two shades of paint, creating a softened gradient line. Additionally, use of organic bright yellows and greens reflect the hopeful implications of the artwork.

Dandelions convey a sense of resilience, especially in that they will find any way to grow and stretch toward light. In this way, they are symbolic for myself and my Year 12 peers, finding our way through vigorous subject choices, COVID challenges and obstacles in order to graduate and journey to find our places and purposes in the world.

The incorporation of dandelions in particular was inspired by Dimitri Sirenko's surreal work, *Resilient Weeds*. This concept, as well as the further development of my composition was inspired by Duy Ahn Duc and Isabelle Chapuis' photographic collaboration, *Dandelion* featuring women in dynamic poses, adorned with embellished dandelion seed heads and parachute seeds. However, the nature of the flowers 'sprouting up' from the grass and within my subject's hair was inspired by Monique Martin's three-dimensional installation *Context is Everything*, which incorporates the sprouting of bright yellow flowers from unusual places. Additionally, placement of flowers was inspired by Sirenko's use of dandelions springing from his subject's countenance.

This idea is communicated by use of direct, yet non challenging eye contact, reassuring the viewer to be resilient in their personal trials. The upturned hand is a welcoming, relaxed and kind gesture. Dandelions are invasive, choking and can overtake plants that are weaker. The three dimensionally painted dandelion in my work is not threatening domination, but a reminder that we can live symbiotically with adversity and with resilience still thrive even though weeds surround us.