Self-Portrait

Oliver Carr

My self-portrait started as an experimental artwork, as I delved into this painting style as using acrylic paint was a medium that I am not comfortable with. The image depicts me in an honourable pose, showing my own perspective on both my personal confidence and development throughout the passing years. Ben Quilty, Basquiat, Andy Warhol, Jonnie Cheatwood and Joseph Lee were my main sources of inspiration. The work of these artsists further influenced my style throughout the planning process. Despite a final work that was not like these art movements I gravitated to Dadaism and Anti-art movements, because I wanted to create a work that discussed the relevance and meaning of art in modern society. The grungy and dark works of both Basquiat and George- Eugene Hausmann had a striking and emotive artistic effect which was something I admired and aspired to replicate.

Although very different to my final aesthetic, Basquiat's influence is seen in the background of my portrait with block colours aimed to provoke both childlike themes and a flat, bland backdrop, which I believe reflects my identity. With my fascination with both Ben Quilty's abstract, impasto portraits (Self-portrait, 3 months off, 2015 oil on linen) and Basquiat's urban childlike paintings, having a great influence on my style, I wanted to portray my bubbly, childlike self, but also the proud, independent, and joyous young man I believe I have become. With a large variety of texture and colours throughout my portrait, I wanted to evoke both curiosity and uplifting surprise with my use of vibrant and striking colours and the unconventional impasto painting technique.

This portrait also served as a self-reflection and a way to recognise the figure I have become. I wanted to depict myself in a valiant and honourable pose that portrayed the maturity and personal security that I am extremely grateful to have developed over the past years. Throughout the process, I surprised myself with the speed and tonal accuracy I was able to depict the shadows and facial features. Although my use of a more vibrant and inaccurate skin palette was initially a mistake, I later realised it added an uplifting warmth to the portrait and portrayed my bubbly figure. The black framing was also an aspect of the piece that allowed me to develop skills to experiment and develop my craft skills.

Despite it not being an 'artistic' technique, I believe my framing enhances the experience as it focuses attention into the centre of the portrait. Throughout the painting process, I had to alter and change sections. When completing the hair, top strands stood out too much and were distracting. I also placed more skin tones throughout the forehead as my hair is thin. Adding more shadows to my jumper and altering small parts under my eyes were challenged that I resolved to complete my self- portrait.