

A Cuddle with George

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A Cuddle with George is an oil painting depicting myself holding my cat, while painting. I wanted to focus on two loves of mine, my cat George and love of painting. The piece is heavily influenced by two art movements I have an interest in, renaissance and classical, both of which I tried to portray with the posing of the figure, colour scheme and art style.

The intended meaning of this piece was to show and represent the relationships humans and animals have. I show this through the close proximity of the myself and George. A lot of people have pets of their own and may be able to relate to the composition through the love of their own pets. I hope to be able to make viewers think of their own pets and appreciate the love and comfort they bring. The composition is also a great way for me to think on my own connection with George.

I regularly follow YouTube tutorial videos by Chris Fornataro who goes through a range of oil painting techniques and rules. From his videos I made sure to remember these 3 oil-painting rules:

- Thin to Thick
- Dark to light
- Fat over lean

Each of these techniques allowed me to follow a process to ensure the application of the paint was successful and effective.

I was primarily influenced by Rupert Bunny's works with his use of mellow and dream-like compositions with soft, light and slightly desaturated use of colours. He often displays a transparent aesthetic within his pieces. Another artist I was inspired by was Henriëtte Ronner-Knip and her endearing cat paintings. Compared to Rupert Bunny, her paintings contain more brown tones. I found her when searching for artists whose styles I could analyse and experiment. I took note of Henriette Ronner-Knip's use of brown tones within my composition in certain areas of the canvas to contrast with the brightness of the female figure and create more emphasis on the subject which is myself and George.

There were times where I was worried about getting it finished, and moments where I just didn't want to paint, but I pushed through and I don't regret it. Through this experience I learnt how deadlines really can hinder the creative process and inspiration due to stress. Art takes time and cannot be rushed. Despite looking simple, much skill and experience is required to paint a pleasing painting. Learning from other practitioners really assisted in my artistic development by analysing and experimenting with many different art styles and techniques I may not have thought to look at. This analysis and experimentation of other practitioners helped me to go through trial and error and refine my skills in preparation for the final practical piece.

While I am proud of my achievements of this composition, given the time frame I had, I feel that more refinements could be made such as making the colour of the dress more subdued and working on the blending and intricacies of the face. I plan to continue to refine my composition after submission to ensure it is something I am truly happy with.