

## *Moments of Worship*

### **Alexandra Borgo**

My artwork is presented in the form of a triptych, conveying the idea that worship takes many forms; representing intimate moments of joy and peace, rooted in a divine spiritual connection to God. Faith is personal to the individual and therefore looks different for each person. This is conveyed within my two portraits, as one subject has her eyes closed and hands extended in prayer, while the other is joyful in expression, her hands resting gracefully over her heart. The theme of worship is enhanced through the middle painting, the focal point being the overwhelming, glowing, textured cross. The 'unfinished' appearance of the gold leaf inspires visual movement and a faith which is 'on fire' for God. All three artworks are unified by this cross, a radiant and bold symbol at the heart of each painting, representing peace, love and faith.

The choices of line, colour and texture within my paintings enhance both the individual mood of the artworks, and the collective mood of the triptych. The dominant colours are monochromatic hues of pink, red and blue, inspiring visual interest. The soft, yet bold pink of the first portrait evokes a sense of harmony and peace, supported by the subject's thoughtful expression. In contrast, a dramatic atmosphere is created through the dark blue background of my second portrait, as the thick, textured lines of the cross bring the subject forward. A joyful mood is portrayed through the subject's jubilant expression and warm rosy cheeks. The middle artwork ties the two portraits together, making a simple, yet bold statement about the nature of faith. Applied gold leaf created texture and brought the cross forward. The striking orange demands the attention of the viewer, evoking a sense of energy. The two portraits either side of the cross are smaller in size and therefore more intimate, reinforcing the idea that faith is personal.

Artists who influenced the style and techniques of my artworks include Malcom T. Leipke, who paints bold and textured backgrounds, and Pablo Tapia. Within Tapia's portrait Maria, thickly applied paint emphasises highlights and shadows within the subject's face, creating visual interest. Inspired by the gestural nature of his brushstrokes, I included raw brushstrokes, inspiring movement. Similarly, the bold orange, textured background within Leipke's portrait brings the subject forward, which is a technique I used, through the bold and thickly applied symbol of the cross.

I encountered many challenges while painting this body of work, which both set me back and encouraged me to persevere and use these trials to improve. Initially, I planned to paint three portraits with each subject portraying a different moment of worship. The third portrait proved to be difficult, particularly when trying to achieve a relaxed, yet thoughtful expression. I no longer felt the joy of painting something that I loved, and therefore decided to discontinue the painting and include the significant connecting cross.

I'm grateful for the challenges I faced, as they helped me to push boundaries to create art that I am proud of. I feel that my paintings effectively convey moments of worship, simultaneously portraying the differences in an individual's expression of faith.