

Au revoir, Spring

Angel Contessotto

The overall concept for my major body of work is to explore Classicism in the form of still life and symbolic landscape. The aim of my artwork is to highlight the appreciation and the importance of nature and meaning in life. Through analysing various artists, I was able to learn and develop my own ideas to convey messages through provoking compositions.

From the work of Caravaggio, I was heavily inspired by the use of chiaroscuro lighting and contrasting tones in the form of Classicism. However, within my work I accentuated the use of vibrant colours, contrasting between the muted monochromatic tones within the table and background of the piece. I used triangle compositions to create a sense of balance and harmony by arranging the fruits in a stable geometric structure to create a sense of authenticity.

Whilst producing this work, I have learnt and improved my practical skills by exploring my intention. I further developed my blending techniques by experimenting with using oil paint and learnt how to use the medium to create a smooth consistency when creating my work. The body of work I created was 3 small scale fruit oil paintings, all connected through the use of dark tones and contrasting highlights. I intended for my pieces to capture the organic textures and tones of fruits by focusing on small sections of the artwork. I used different tones including analogous and complementary colours to create depth without using monochromatic tones. Through creating these artworks, it allowed me to build on my skills and familiarity of the medium in preparation for my larger scale oil paintings.

Within my second practical, I created a large-scale oil paint on canvas piece with the subject matter of fruit on a table. The triangular composition and monochromatic background help accentuate the vibrancy of the fruits. The classicism aspects are prevalent within this piece, through the use of symbolism of the fruits and dark tones which accentuate the natural lighting of the piece. The focal point of my first piece is the open pomegranate, central within the composition in unity with the other fruits, which is one out of three fruits cut open to symbolize vitality. This is further accentuated by the abundance of highlights within the pomegranate seeds. The symbolic meaning of the number of fruits is the abundance of happiness within humanity. The porcelain bowl creates a realistic scaling system and is where the initial tones of the crimson base layer appear the most, demonstrating depth of layers.

My third practical consisted of a figure sitting near a pond to convey the viewer into a state of contemplation to reflect on their youth or cherish past memories. This is metaphorically represented through the setting of the pond which is reflective. My large-scale canvas painting connects to this idea, each containing a figure in contemplation within different stages of life. The statue in the background appears in both paintings to symbolize guidance and optimism of the future as reflected in the use of yellow highlights of the figure. This piece was inspired by the impressionist movement, particularly Claude Monet, as seen within the frequent brushstrokes of the pond creating a sense of depth within the water.

For my fourth practical, I chose to paint a figure sitting next to a tree surrounded by nature, for the viewers to appreciate everyday life. This piece was inspired by Bunny's use of composition and symbolism, prevalent within his work to convey a complex intended message. The use of contrast in colour helped further develop my composition as it created scaling which helped accentuate the realism as if the viewer was within the painting. This creates a sense of personal and emotional connection, to philosophically contemplate about. The salient composition is created through a path in the forest for the viewer to feel like they are in the painting, emphasized by the scaling of the figure next to the tree. The message of my work is to remain optimistic and keep moving forward, supported by the use of yellow paint to symbolize happiness and light.

My practical work has successfully expressed the style of classicism in a contemporary form, then progressed into symbolic meaning. The concept is met through the use of unique composition, and vivid colours prevalent within the final pieces. A challenge I encountered was my commitment to adding highlights and darker tones, as I wanted to keep the subject matter realistic, however I managed to progress and add more layers of highlights which improved my overall practical work, showing depth and perspective. I have developed my own style as an artist, through exploring various subject matter and using the oil paint medium, which I only began at the start of this year. I have learnt that the hope perceived by an artist is transmitted upon the audience of their work. Moreover, I have learnt that art reconciles us with the world by reconnecting with people and bringing us back to reality. Through the use of simplistic subject matter, I have been able to philosophically convey to the viewer that the meaning we search for in life has always been around us.