

Practitioner's Statement

Flowing Reflections

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My brief was to explore aspects of aesthetics within nature and presents in a myriad of forms. Through experimentation of drawings and researching symbolisms that are personal, I wanted to address areas of culture, human form, music and emotions. For centuries, people have been fascinated with the nature of beauty throughout philosophy. Ancient Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle have engaged in this riddle and have continually exploring such questions as, "Is beauty universal? How do we know it? How can we predispose ourselves to embrace it?"

Historian George Bancroft quotes, "Beauty itself is but the sensible image of the infinite".

Over many years, humans have developed an "Aesthetic Attitude". This is a state where humans consider a subject for no other purpose other than appreciation and these form as thought processes of senses, imagination, intellect or a combination of these occur.

With appreciation of beauty in mind, I began to research "What is beautiful?" through a spectrum of media. I drew inspiration from Marion Bolognesi artwork with watercolours that sharpened my focus through her ability to capture human emotion and expressions in her gallery in Boston. The ability to identify and connect with human emotion led me to investigate facial photo-shoots. Artist Marion Bolognesi and photographer James Hartley, capture the form of human beauty using different mediums.

My first practical started with a design inspired by James Hartley, a Photo-shoot called "Colour of my Tears". I was able to utilise a model wearing a range of clothing that varied in colour and length. Through extensive experimentation, I became fascinated with the capture of colours combined with movement through a lens. Adding to the complexity, Hartley embraced the concept of an underwater shoot. My father scuba dives and enjoys underwater photography but has always expressed the difficulty of capturing fast movement of objects underwater and yet still maintains the depth and clarity of colour. I experimented with lighting, once during the day at midday and once at night using strategically placed spotlights on the model to capture highlights of colour and shadow effects.

The final choice of the female form with a long flowing dress with shades of blue, green, yellow and white highlights became the pivotal piece of work for my presentation. For my second practical, I was able to draw upon the inspiration of Emma Hack's appreciation of body formation using acrylic paints. James Hartley is an Australian photographer and Emma Hack is an Australian artist. Both inspired me by the way they capture colour and movement. Additionally, works by Joan Mitchell provided me with the idea of abstract use of colours and blends. Marion Bolognesi's work is another artist who influenced my practical, via the portrayal of a true auspicious of human facial expressions. Her ability to capture depth transcends emotions through the complex use of water colours.

These artists assisted me with my development of a vision that was to utilise primary and secondary colours and the use of tinting to define a tone and the symbolism of a flowing dress underwater.

I experimented with acrylic paints to construct low key tones and also to substantiate my choice of using a highlight of white that reflects through the ripples of water. Through several experimentations and techniques, I settled on the use of blending to create the illusion of 3dimensional folding of material in a vacuum of zero gravity. This scenario is similar to the flow of water and I used wet-into-wet blending as a technique to embrace this fluid movement. Whilst this technique was messy, it provided me with the quality of finish I was seeking.

This final product was taken from a realistic snapshot of a dress worn underwater but is represented as a semi-abstract stylised piece of work. The problem was to combine the accuracy of the lighting captured in photographs and emulate this on canvas.

I experimented with different colours and tones in my photographs incorporating movement. As a part of the investigation, I captured photos of numerous dresses. My initial thought was to use a short dress of pink tones and then moved to trialling long dresses in black and white tones. With the final dress chosen and captured, I was able to scan this photograph and with some degree of precision, I was able to re-create my interpretation of proportion and scale and establish defined lines and shading.

Once an outline was defined I was able to focus on the subtle blending of the primary and secondary colours and develop a contrasting colour on the frame.

This practical has met my expectations and I am happy with the outcome. I am pleased with the imagery of flowing reflections that capture distorted movement as the model wearing the dress moves underwater. This experience has made me value the ability undertaken by artists to portray an intriguing yet transfixing piece of Visual Art.