

Untitled

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I've always held a deep fascination with the human experience, not just the biological aspects but also the intricate tapestry of emotions, desires, and memories that shape our lives. Additionally, I found myself drawn to hyper-realistic oil-paint portraits, appreciating the way they create smooth, blended textures due to its thick consistency.

As I embarked on this artistic journey, I encountered the works of artists Robert Longo, Enrico Roubusti, and Jasmine Crisp. What struck me about these artists was their ability to breathe life into their realistic portraits. Two of them employed a vibrant palette which appealed to me. Crisp especially had a distinctive approach of weaving stories and memories of her subjects into her art, using scattered objects in the background. This recurring theme of 'memories' lead me to think of photographer Gabriele Galimberti, who takes photographs of children and their toys, ultimately depicting the different lives of children through toys. This reflection led me to develop a deep sentimentality towards youth and childhood, especially as I approach the end of my adolescence.

Taking inspiration from photographer Galimberti, Roubusti's artistic style, and the way Crisp uses objects to depict people, I decided I will take photographs of my younger cousin and his toys, then paint the image after manipulating it. Taking planned and spontaneous photos, I aimed to capture what I think is essence of childhood- innocence and freedom. Considering the purpose of my work is to transport viewers on a retrospective journey back to their own childhoods and inviting them to appreciate what nostalgia means to me, I feel the final photo sufficiently achieved my goals. The toy bear serves as an iconic symbol of childhood, while the long, distant hallway evokes a sense of longing and emptiness.

In my search for a way to further communicate this sense of nostalgia, I stumbled upon the work of Enzo Comin. He added visual effects to his photography, creating an 'aged' and rustic appearance. I applied a similar approach to my pictures, giving them a yellow and darker tone to mimic the look of a faded photograph.

I utilized Winsor and Newton Winston oil colours to paint. I favoured the painterly appearance that emerged when the base layers and background colours blended together. This, in my view, made the painting appear less 'perfect' and more inviting to the audience. I employed thick square hog-hair brushes for blocking in the base colours, mixed with Liquin for quicker drying. The rough bristles of these brushes proved effective in capturing the texture of wooden floors through repeated linear strokes with darker dry paint. For textured surfaces such as the toy bear, I used filbert brushes, which allowed for good coverage and intricate strokes in specific areas. For the subject's face and skin, I focused on maintaining true-to-life skin tones.

I am extremely pleased with the outcome of my artwork. I feel I have achieved my desired effect of portraying sentiment and 'nostalgia' while successfully employing a realistic painting style true to the reference photo.