Solitude

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Loneliness is something that is often portrayed negatively through the absence of an emotional satisfaction only found in the company of others. As humans tend to fear a state of solitude, attributing it to unlikeable personality characteristics or boredom, this creates a generalised ideology that labels being alone as undesirable. Despite this, loneliness can be embraced through an optimistic outlook regarding a stronger sense of self or just time to recompose.

In Solitude (40.6 x 50.8cm), I sought to portray the experience of loneliness as a point of being unencumbered. The human mind and body dually affected as a moment to psychologically and physically recharge. Through a genre-style painting, I reflected on how smaller moments taken away from the busyness of life can provide an escape from reality and influence invigoration of the psyche.

Using a range of acrylic paints, I created an artwork that strongly resembled this concept of loneliness, depicting myself sitting on my bed whilst reading in solitude. The focal point of the painting draws the viewer's attention through the use of soft highlighting and centre-positioning of the subject. The bolder use of colours in both the foreground and background resembles the warmer, joyous familiarity of the scene that truly inspires feelings of serenity, reflecting the calmness of being alone. The implementation of various values within the painting process aided in capturing a scene of everyday life that the audience can easily relate to, showing how a small moment of solitude can be enjoyable for anyone.

When investigating the ways in which loneliness can be portrayed, a range of concepts surround this theme such as abandonment, serene calmness, or the state of being melancholy. One artist in particular who conceptualised loneliness is Sivan Karim; exploring this theme through Surrealism, he captured his lone female subjects in an unhurried, calming tone, using organic patterns to emanate striking confidence in a monochromatic palette. Karim's style of artwork was implemented through the use of bold patterns, alongside the representation of women while in a state of solitude. Artist Ferenc Pintér also inspired several elements within the artwork, including the underlying melancholic tone where, despite the use of bright colours, there is a sense of dejection. This aspect strongly reflects Pintér's works which reflected a relaxed, contemplative state using kinesics, facial expressions, and colouring. Another artist who strongly inspired Solitude was Erika Sears. Her typical style of oil painting captures the small, insignificant moments of everyday life while alone, using colourful scenes to showcase contentment and the happiness that accompanies loneliness. Sears' artworks often convey a sense of psychological decompression that explores the way in which humans require solitude to revitalise.

Loneliness is a poignant human construct that not only describes the physical state of solitude, but the emotive impacts too, typically being associated with feelings of negativity. Although this term depicts the natural human need for connectivity and absence of that connection, solitude provides an opportunity to recompose while enabling a self-understanding of the human psyche.