

Oiled Love

Nimrit Gill

Oiled Love depicts an intimate scene of a Punjabi mother tenderly oiling her daughter's hair inspired by a poem written by Harman Kaur who explains that the art of oiling "is how my mother and I hold on to each other", portraying it as an act of connection, love, and support. I found this portrayal deeply moving and resonated with me on a personal level. This painting showed themes of connection and culture as oiling hair is a traditional and ancient practice that holds deep cultural significance within Indian communities. It is a symbol of identity, heritage, and personal pride.

Oiled Love is a digital artwork drawn in the app, Procreate as I wanted to continue to improve my digital art skills after studying it in my visual study. However, with this medium I aimed to achieve a high level of realism and create the appearance of a traditional painting digitally. Through artist Court Jones I learned that to create a more painterly look, I would have to use a single layer to blend the colours together rather than creating separate layers for different elements of the painting. This has resulted my painting to blended well together as painting the women on the same layer resulted in her to be blended seamlessly into the background. Jones also recommended using a textured brush throughout the painting process. Therefore, I utilised a rough brush making the edges jagged and fuzzy giving the artwork a dreamy look. Moreover, the body language of the women was inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite artists, who focused on the women body language. I aimed to capture the mother's gentle touch and the daughter's receptive posture to convey the unspoken language of love by positioning the bodies inward and leaning towards each other.

However, I encountered challenges when painting the subtle nuances of skin tones and lighting due to the main light source being a small lit candle. This caused me to over emphasis the shadows on the face, resulting in a muddy and greyish skin tone. Initially, I wanted to create an atmosphere similar to Jordan Sokol's work, with the background being black. But I found it difficult to create detail on the women as I had no direct light to work with. Therefore, I decided to completely change the composition of my artwork. I introduced two distinct light sources to illuminate the scene – one emanating from behind to simulate natural sunlight and another from the front, emitted by the gentle glow of a candle. Additionally, I positioned the women to turn $\frac{3}{4}$ away from the front as I found it difficult to paint a full face which helped me greatly as I was able to comfortably paint the face. The new lighting changed the entire atmosphere of the artwork into a dreamy and soft mood as the interplay of light and shadow became more pronounced. Overall, I'm very impressed with the final outcome of the artwork and how I managed to resemble it like a traditional painting. My shading and colour play skills have improved greatly as painting fire was a great challenge but an opportunity to grow. After studying colour in my visual study, I wasn't afraid to use vibrant colours used for the Punjabi suits. It's through these bold and expressive colours that I was able to capture the lively spirit and celebratory atmosphere of the scene.