

## *Humans and nature*

### **Jemma Gittins**

'Humans and nature' is a 420x596mm acrylic on canvas painting depicting the view of a dreary and unhealthy city out of a window. This painting represents my personal views about issues in this world causing the mass destruction of nature such as overpopulation, overconsumption, and pollution. The themes of the painting were influenced by artist Alexis Rockman who focuses on the negative effects that humans have on nature in his paintings. I was inspired by some of the imagery used in his paintings such as chaos and clutter to represent overconsumption. I also took inspiration from his use of bright, unnatural colours, which shows unnatural human impact.

The imagery for the painting was created by loosely following various reference images for inspiration. This made the painting more symbolic and less illustrative. It also gave me the opportunity to avoid creating a photorealistic piece while still being able to portray a familiar realistic style without requiring the suspension of disbelief. I used Matisse and Mont Marte acrylic paints as I am comfortable with the process of acrylic paints and knew they would allow me to create a painting with fine details. I used size 6 or larger flat brushes to do large sections of painting before going over it with using sizes 16/0, 1, and 3 liner brushes that allowed for controlled and detailed lines. I found this worked well to achieve the intricate details I was aiming for. The realistic style of the painting was influenced primarily by Zdzisław Beksiński and Vermeer.

The duller colours used in the room were influenced by Zdzisław Beksiński who painted lots of dystopian scenes using dark and muted colours to show the gloomy tone of the painting. The contrasting colours in the building outside the window were influenced by Gustave Caillebotte's clever use of complimentary colours which draws the viewers' attention to a specific place. Thomas Coles 'The Empire' series (1833-1836) influenced the crowded streets outside the window which represents overpopulation.

Vermeer's 'Girl reading a letter at an open window' (1657) influenced the imagery of viewing the world through a window. I chose to incorporate the window to show the aspects of the painting that are far away such as the buildings and people, as well as being able to use imagery such as the taxidermy butterfly and the dying plant which are closer to the viewer. The plant being in the only shaded part of the windowsill symbolises the lack of actions taken by humans to fix the damage that they have done to the world.

I am satisfied with my final piece as it accurately represents my opinions about humans and their negative impacts on nature as well as showing my abilities to use acrylic painting techniques and using colour effectively. It also clearly shows its influencing artists, Vermeer, Thomas Cole, Zdzisław Beksiński, Alexis Rockman, and Gustave Caillebotte.

This painting should inspire action against the unsustainable ways in which humans are treating the Earth and all of its delicate and magnificent nature.