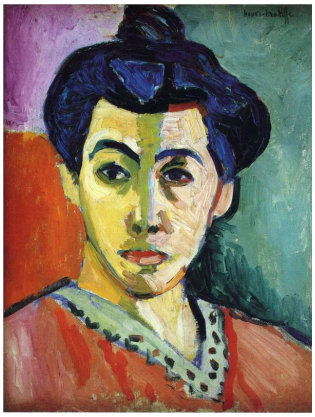
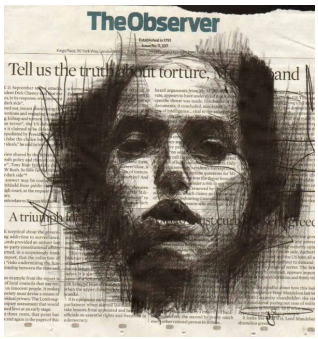
THE DEPTHS OF MY YOUTH

BY EMILY FENNELL

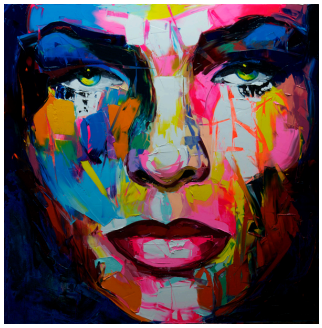


Madame Mattise, Henri Mattise, 1905



The Story of Odette, Guy Denning 2010

East Yorkshire, David Hockney 2011



Alexandra, Francoise Nielly, 2013

Study of Water, Hockney, 1994

The experiences and the people closest to me have shaped my mere 17 years of existence. *The Depth of My Youth* is a testament to the positive and negative components of my being, as everything I have experienced has determined who I am today. One of the strongest and most important aspects of my youth is competitive swimming.

When I'm in the water, I feel as if I am home. My portraits are symbolic of myself and the journey I've been through as a swimmer. I spend a great majority of my life in the water has been an immediate source of inspiration for this piece. I chose to embody a form of portraiture where strong emotive messages can be thoroughly explored. An example of this is Guy Denning's graphic illustration and powerful portrait, *The Story of Odette (2010).*

Through my own developing interest in the advancing technology of the modern world, I was led to digital art exploration. This enabled me to extend my comfort zone of portraiture and challenged me to work with the unfamiliar and new dimension of working on a screen rather than on a physical canvas.

The iPad program "Pro-create" enabled me to work with technical & oriental brushes coupled with the smudge tool to create abstract water effects along with realistic figures. Through 5 layers, I built base tones and abstract lines, which helped achieve the form of the figure and a powerful body of water.

Through my exploration of portraiture, I fell in love with David Hockney's 2015 intricate iPad drawings.

His use of vibrant colours, inspired by nature, falls closely in line with my new subject matter of water. Hockney has created many different interpretations of movement in water. Hockney largely inspired the water in my drawings as I tried to resemble the different form, shapes and tonal elements Hockney explores.

Additionally, examining the beautiful works of Francoise Nielly's female portraits, *Alexandra* (2013), I learnt to look at shading differently and how it suggests anatomical shape and facial form. Teaching me the importance of shadow placement to create a combination of realism and convey a fresh modern feel. Experimenting with an arbitrary use of colour inspired by fauvist movement and Matisse's portrait of *Madame Matisse.*

Compositionally, a sense of dynamism is achieved through the proliferation of diagonal lines of semiabstract depiction of water contrasting with the near center focal point of the figure. The 3 contrasts of the drawings create depth with the darkest drawing being the deepest and the lightest drawing representing shallow water. I have also chosen to do this to symbolise the idea of competing against yourself through the works repetition. The red creates a contrast between the cool tones in the water and the overlay. The figure embodies a smooth texture, achieving a skin like feel which contrasts with the abstract repetitive background.

Through framing my digital drawing's I aimed to reinforce the depth theme, while creating a more impactful piece. This also further enabled a more extensive range of colour in the figure, contrast