

Body of Work

Sarah Barton

My body of work portrays the beauty of nature, focussing on South Australia's Linear Park. Nature plays a huge role in many people's lives, especially mine, so expressing this in an array of work became my main focus. Living near Linear Park I often visit the area and have grown to love the beautiful landscape. I wanted to depict this beauty through my body of work and display the various aspects of the area. I experimented with the basic elements of art – shapes, colours, tones, and direction trying to create a realistic portrayal of the landscapes through detailed brushstrokes and earthy tones.

I began working with the idea of accurately portraying multiple features of Linear Park. After visiting Hans Heysen's *The Cedars* in the Adelaide Hills, I felt inspired, realising how beautiful Australia's gum trees are and how Heysen accurately depicted these in his works. After this experience I decided I wanted to incorporate aspects of gum trees into my pieces, focussing on their bark in particular.

The intent of my practicals was to portray different aspects of the area incorporating gum trees and their foliage, close-ups of different stages of bark, aspects of the River Torrens such as water, ducks and ripples and lastly, depict a negative aspect of the area, this being pollution. These practicals are all strongly linked by the subject of Linear Park.

My first and second artworks, *The Great Gum* and *Shining Through* involved gum trees. My focus sharpened to try and capture the unique detail found in this species of tree found throughout Linear Park. Through the work I focussed on making the distinctive bark covering the gum trees the focal point of the painting, just as Heysen did. These pieces are connected through the use of natural Australian colour schemes and the composition of the trees in the paintings. Both works are created from a lower point of view, looking up towards the sky through the trees and foliage with the intent of portraying the beauty of the gum trees, without the distraction of the foreground. The trees lead the eye up the painting, from the bottom of the gum tree to the top. Contrasts between lighter and darker tones in the trees were formed, just as Symbolist painter Gustav Klimt did. *Shining Through* displays the differentiation in bark as well as the way afternoon sun shines onto tree tops.

My third, fourth and fifth artworks, *The Beginning*, *Rejuvenation* and *Fallen* focused on the life and stages of bark. I created three pieces with the intent of accurately depicting the three key stages of bark. The colour scheme of each piece is linked by the introduction of aspects of the main colour into another painting. The idea of focussing on the bark of the trees was

influenced by Margaret Preston and the way she expressed detail in trees using natural tones. Australian Tonalist, Max Meldrum, focused on using variations in tones to create detail and depth in his pieces. I applied his idea into my own work by using varied tones of colour to create dimension and detail.

The Beginning captures the early stages of bark on a gum tree. This painting incorporates softer tones of grey to display the fresh, new beginning of the tree. *Rejuvenation* captures the critical phase of bark when it is beginning to peel off the tree as the tree is creating new bark. This painting incorporates sienna tones with darker burnt umbers to define shadows and darker components whilst using fine detailed brushstrokes to create intricate detail. My fifth artwork, *Fallen*, depicts the final stage of bark fallen off of the tree onto the foreground below. This painting was created using warmer tones, similar to the tones used in *Rejuvenation*, connecting the two pieces together.

Gum leaves were incorporated into the background of *Fallen* to act as a contrast against the pieces of bark. Leaves signify revival and hope which in *Fallen* represents that as each piece of bark decays, new bark is formed on the tree.

My sixth artwork, *The Other Side*, is a collage combining objects found in Linear Park such as bark, leaves, reeds, however focussing on rubbish found around the area. Whilst walking I often find many pieces of rubbish that is a danger to the spectacular creatures such as ducks and birds living in Linear Park. This is an issue I feel strongly about and wanted to convey this in *The Other Side*. This piece contrasts against my other artworks as it shows a not so beautiful, yet realistic side of Linear Park.

My final piece, *Reflecting*, displays the reflections of trees, their foliage and the sky in the River Torrens. Inspired by Rod Bax and his paintings of the south eastern wetlands, ducks were incorporated as they are a key feature of Linear Park, an aspect which I love. This painting is my reflection and favourite aspects of Linear Park combined into one large artwork. The reflection of trees frames the painting, creating the focal point the ducks, the ripples and the shape created in the sky. This reflection surrounding the sky was inspired by the figurative Expressionist, William Robinson. I was inspired by the way he framed his works with the landscape, creating the sky as a focal point. The large board this piece was painted on draws the viewer into the painting, captivating them with the beauty of Linear Park.

I believe I have been able to produce a body of work that successfully captures the essence and features of Linear Park. This was my intention, to invite the viewer to experience the beauty found within the area, a beauty that I am lucky enough to experience on a daily basis.