

Practitioner's statement -Emily Rana

Second Piece: Playing with Shadows

For my second folio and piece I decided to have a look at various charcoal artists such as Lee Woodman, Ginny Grayson and Guy Denning. Looking through their artworks I found that they conveyed a sense of depressing emotion with the use of harsh, dark lines and shadows. I practiced the drawing styles of each artist to see which I liked best, that being Lee Woodman's with his simple yet empowering portraits which showed intense emotion through facial expressions. So, I intended on creating a final piece which has high contrast between white paper and black charcoal, as well as using strong lighting to play with shadows and create an image that was a bit different than a usual portrait. I chose to use my best friend, Georgia as a model for my artwork to add personal relevance.

First, I practiced drawing pictures from each artist to grasp their technique and style of drawing, using various types of charcoal such as vine/willow and compressed. I also researched the different outcomes for each of the types of charcoal and how they are used in drawing. It was interesting to find out about the chiaroscuro effect in light modelling of various media; where three-dimensional volume is suggested by the value gradation of colour and the analytical division of light and shadow shapes. With this in mind, I then took photos of Georgia with the light at different angles to create a series of photos with differing shadows, defining each facial feature differently to show dimension and depth. Finally, I chose a photo and planned to draw it up on a big piece of white paper. I used powdered charcoal to softly tone areas of the page, willow/vine charcoal to start on the larger and darker areas and then added detail and extra darkness with the compressed charcoal. The knead-able eraser also came in handy with erasing areas where light was meant to be and adding highlights to the hair, however I had to be careful when using the compressed charcoal because it is unable to be erased.

Overall, this piece is about the aesthetic beauty of black and white imagery with high contrasted shadows, although it could also be personal expression in the way of showing deep emotion and possibly depressive thoughts. I would like the audience to feel intrigued when viewing this artwork and take notice of the shapes that can be created with lighting and shadows. I learnt that the chiaroscuro effect is often used to achieve dramatic shadow effects and I also discovered some of the history behind it. I explained how different types of charcoal can be used to create varying desired outcomes. I am satisfied with my final product and I love the contrast of the black and white which has created an unusual, sort of creepy picture but has communicated the intended idea of contrast and shadow.