

Practitioner's Statement

"A Rose By Any Other Name Would Smell As Sweet."

My initial interests were to explore shapes and movement in visual art. Artists such as Chuck Elliot, Bridget Riley, Wassily Kandinsky, Cubist and Futurist movements inspired me to draw and paint lines and shapes to create abstract interpretations of objects from life. Even though I enjoy the idea of total abstraction, I felt I wanted my subject to be identifiable, therefore the compromise of semi abstract painting was the answer.

To generate my own interpretations I took photographs particularly of flowers as I was drawn to organic shapes and because of my personal admiration of spring time. I drew and manipulated them into diverse compositions, then painted them using a variety of media and techniques from the artists I studied. This presented me with a number of choices and limitations, I identified constraints such as use of space, tone, texture and colour. After discovering the art of Georgia O'Keefe and her intense observation of nature from a feminine perspective, I began seriously working with the idea of nature abstraction. I liked the organic shapes and patterns of O'Keefe and felt that they would successfully inspire and connect with my semi abstract experimentations. It was difficult to combine and layer each subject with the many technical approaches that I wanted. Finally, by focusing on the exploration of organic shape, colour and tone in nature my approach seemed more progressive rather than inclusive to all my experiments.

I felt an immediate connection with O'Keefe's artwork and I began to crop my photographs and observe the close up details of roses. Each of the photos of roses that I took was unique and each image depicted particular qualities that I wanted to capture through oil painting. After experimenting with many mediums, including, pastels, watercolour, acrylic, paper collage, pen, I found that oil paint offered a richness and depth that enabled me to capture the subtle details, colours and tones of a rose with a soft delicacy.

By enlarging the inner section of the rose and its many layers of light petals and folds I realized that it created an abstracted landscape or showed the inner world of the flower.

"When you take a flower in your hand and really look at it, it's your world for the moment. I want to give that world to someone else" (Georgia O'Keefe, date unknown, <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-okeeffe-georgia.htm>).

O'Keefe uses complex colour schemes to convey a sense of light and the complexity of the organic shapes within the magnified scrutiny of the natural object. I applied her idea of using varied tones of colour to paint the flowers petals, highlighting key areas of the chosen flowers. Influenced by O'Keefe I developed two connecting colour schemes that reinforce the different shapes from inside the flower. To maintain a perception of abstraction I divided my chosen flower image and spread it across three rectangular canvases, creating a sense that it belonged to one image. Accompanying this triptych is a circular canvas portraying the centre of a rose which offers a reference in its entirety.

My Practical encourages viewers to imagine what it is like to be inside the flower or to perhaps even imagine an unfamiliar place of beauty and warmth. I believe that I have successfully conveyed the beauty of nature expressing the connections between the real and the abstract, as well as an appreciation for the qualities of colour, tone, organic shape, movement and painting.