

The piece I created - *'Listening (inner self-portrait)'* - depicts myself directly facing the audience, with glasses pushed to the top of my head, and an intent, 'I'm listening' expression. The style of representation is realism, or semi-realism, with a background of colourful abstracted lines and shapes. Inspirations for this artwork include Fauvism and Cubism as movements; Fauvism specifically for the bold and bright use of colour.

This piece is mostly focused around the concept of identity (and the idea of the 'true-self'). I intended to communicate an idea of the external-self in juxtaposition to the internal-self, with the external-self - one's appearance and features - being generally immutable, and the internal-self being everything else that goes into making someone themselves. This includes emotions, personality, creativity, skills, and other 'dynamic' things. These ideas are represented in the piece, with the external-self symbolised by the black-and-white, realistic figure, and the internal-self shown through the vibrant and dynamic lines, colours and textures.

The use of ballpoint pen in the portrait intentionally builds a sense of form, value, shape, and texture, through many fine lines and varying weight of line. This use of many small markings making up the 'whole', along with creating visual interest, also builds into ideas around identity: everybody is just the sum of many smaller parts. The dynamic lines emanating from the figure serve several purposes: they make the composition stronger by guiding the audience's eyes to the central figure, they create visual interest and a sense of movement with their bold and textural markings, and they bring in an idea of 'the radiance of the self', which I was also interested in communicating in this piece.

When taking into account colour symbolism - yellow and orange representing joy, the 'true-self', and green representing the environment, the external world - it is apparent that within the piece, the joy and the 'true-self' is inner-most to the figure, and almost appears to be reaching out into the environment and the external world. This symbolises my personal values of trying to better the world around me by being my true self; trying to bring joy into everything I do. I like to feel that this applies on a broader scale when looking at the nature of humanity, though perhaps that is a little optimistic.

In addition to these elements, I also created the artwork on quite a large scale. The idea behind this was that it would make the piece more visually arresting and interesting, as well as allowing me to put a great deal of care into the linework and have it still be visible from a reasonable distance. The scale also contributes to the idea of the self, the 'true-self', and one's identity, as being real and confronting, and something too large a part of yourself - and the world you live in - to run away from.