Visual Enquiry 2 ADAA5009

2204991 Megan Barnacal.

This PDF file shows the development over the last semester of my work during the Visual Enquiry 2 module. We have had a few different lectures in this module. I am also included in this PDF some research or artist research that has helped with my development in the Visual Enquiry 2 module.

At the start of the semester, I mainly worked with neutral toned oil paints. I would usually focus on portraiture and still life and did not really stray far from oil paints in terms of materials.

During the first semester of second year, we only really used charcoal during our life drawing sessions. But recently, we have been using a lot more paint in the life drawing sessions and I personally think that it has really benefited me in my art development.

Throughout my second semester, I have been trying to develop my own style when it comes to my art practice. Because just as much as I love portraiture and still life, it did not feel very personal, or individual compared to other artist styles. I used to get artist block quite often so I would like to look at different artists for inspiration and ideas, but it never felt it was my own individual style. So, the Visual Enquiry 2 module this semester has been extremely helpful for me and towards my work.

Charcoal Life Drawing Sessions.

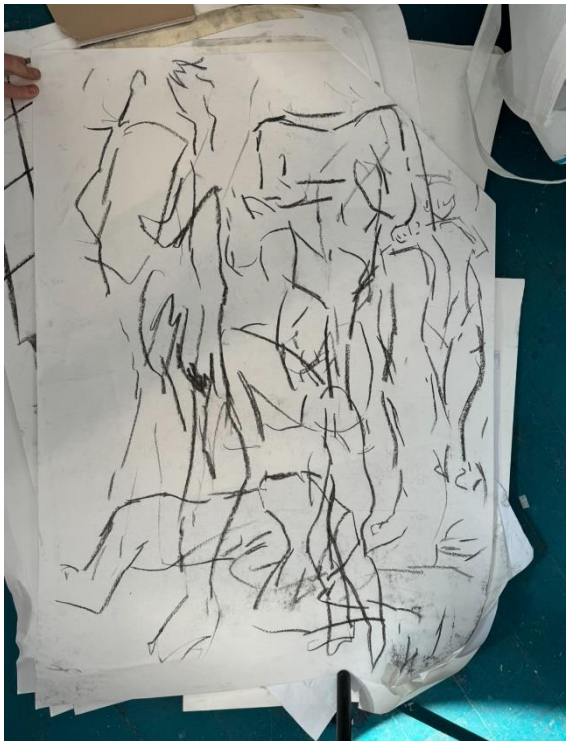
At the start of the semester, we continued to use charcoal with our practice. At this time, I was mainly using condensed charcoal, but these pieces were a mix of soft and condensed charcoal. Working with the life models in the life room, these are the first pieces that I made with charcoal at the start of the semester. They did not differ much from the last charcoal pieces that I made at the end of first semester, but I was still practicing with different materials.

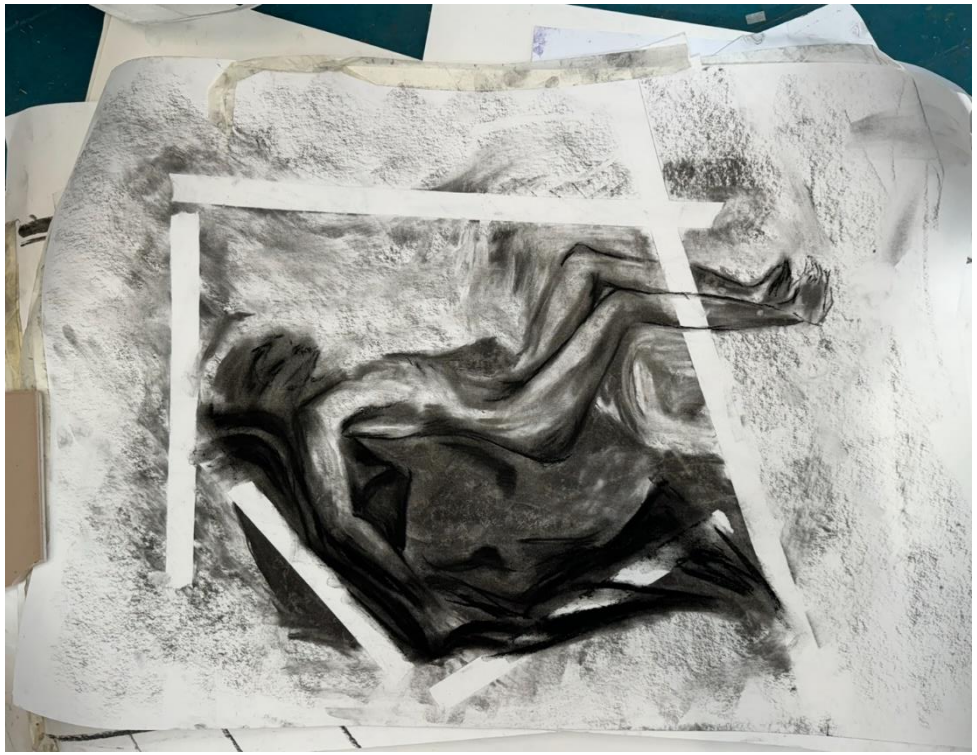
With the outcome of these pieces, I knew that I could improve with the material. I liked the use of condensed charcoal because, when I used it, I liked the contrast that It showed in the pieces. I struggled at this time to get the proportions of the body correct. I think that I was trying to get the measurements precise during a short amount of time. This caused me to try and get one part of the drawing perfect whilst the other places were not developed. I noticed this during last semester, and I did get better with my time management during these lectures but for example, I still noticed myself trying to focus on smaller features such as hands, of the shading of the body or sometimes even try to focus more on the interior of the room more than the life model.

What I found was useful to overcome this stigma during life drawing was suggested in the first semester. This idea was to use a block colour or rubbing out of a previous drawing to help the mindset of the 'perfection' idea of the drawing. I found this to be helpful because what I also found is that I would try to draw smaller to perfect the body proportions.

To help with the techniques of my struggle in these lectures, as a class, we used different techniques involving different materials. One of the techniques was using masking tape on a piece before drawing on it at all. I put on five pieces of masking tape onto the paper. Then using soft and condensed charcoal on top of the masking tape and drawing as usual. We were allowed to take off the tape at any point of the session we wanted but I wanted to take off the tape close to the end of the session. Ideally, I wanted to see the contrast difference and see the perspective of how much I had managed to draw in that period.

This image is of a piece we would refer to as a quick study/ sketch. We would use it as a way to ‘warm up’ before starting a life drawing session. What happens is, the life model on the day would change poses every 30 seconds and we would have to draw the outline and pose of the body. It is sort of a quick way to get into the habit of acknowledging proportions in a short amount of time. I loved these drawings, for me, they would always turn out what looks like lines, but you can make out the figure in the pieces. Personally, I found this helped me a lot when it comes to my development. Because of it forcing me to complete it in a short amount of time, I manage to use up pretty much all the space on the paper. I am usually used to working on small pieces of work, so, I loved to start of doing this because it never had to be perfect. To put into perspective, these drawings/ pieces were usually around A2 sizes.



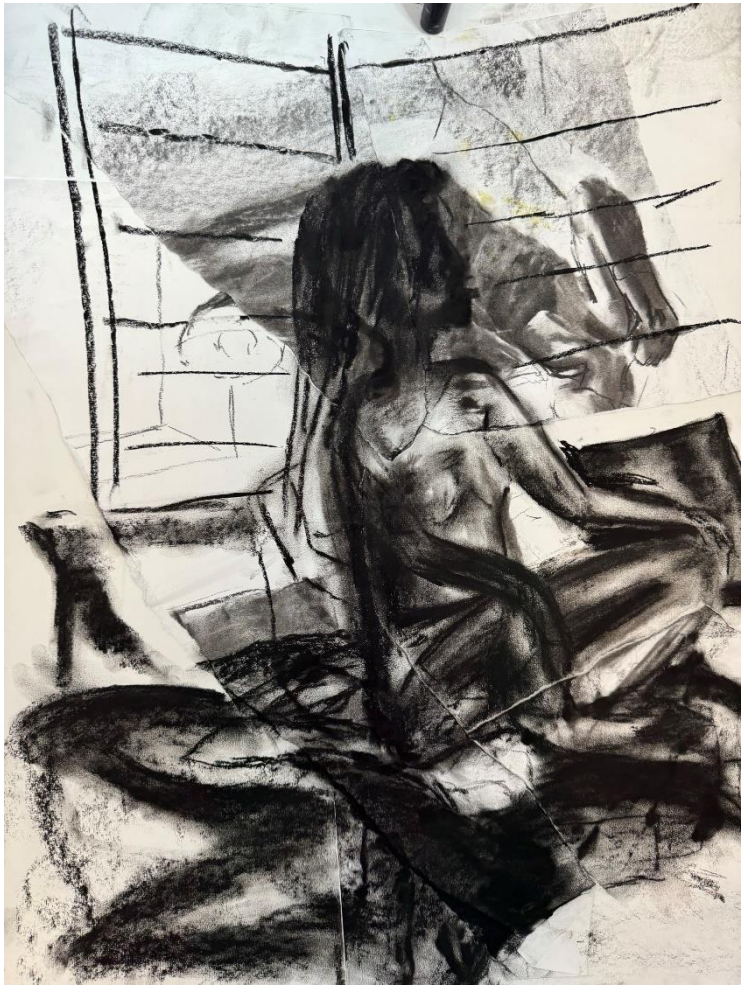


Charcoal & Masking Tape Life Drawings

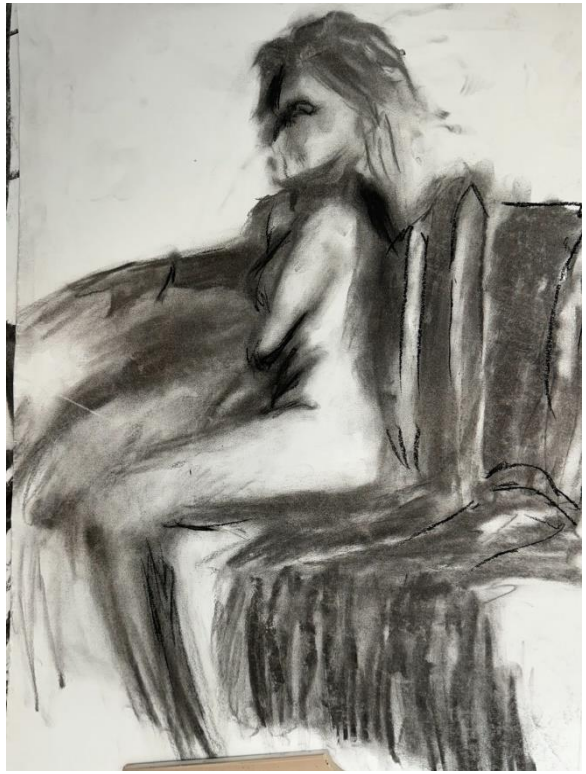
As shown, I had taken off the masking tape around 10 minutes before that session was over. Its common for there to be rarely just the colour white in a realistic artwork/ piece, so it was fun to see the contrast difference. Personally, I think its good to see the white colour on top of the drawing that I created and the difference in shades on the piece. This concept would be cool to use to include for future use to try and help with colour scheming. I think that it would be a good way to determine the tonal values of a piece.

Overlapping Charcoal Life Drawings.

These images are some examples of the overlapping of charcoal drawings. I found this strategy extremely helpful when it came to my charcoal drawings. Before the lecture, we had to use a previous charcoal drawing from the module, I tore up this drawing into several pieces, I used one that I thought was not the best of my ability, to try and turn it into a better outcome. You can see the mark making from the previous torn up charcoal drawing. I tore up the old art piece into 5 different angles and stuck them around the new page in different positions with pva glue. As you can faintly see, on the top of the drawing, you can see a previous drawing of one of the life models upside down. This, again, helped to challenge me with the proportions and also forced me to adapt to the already drawn on and moved around art work.



Below I have attached two images of two pieces I had made in one of the life drawing sessions, these were made around a month after using the two different techniques I had mentioned above. As I mentioned, I struggled at the start of the semester with my time management during these sessions and I never liked the outcome of how unfinished they would always look despite the effort I put into the drawings, after using the masking tape, overlapping materials and creating quick sketches before the sessions, I saw a big change in the overall piece.



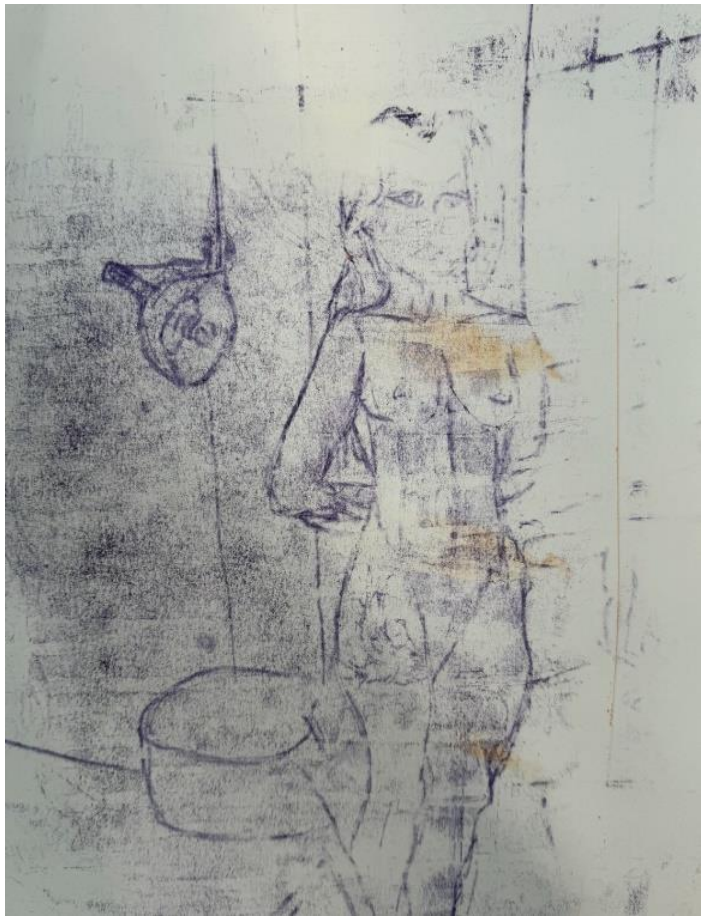
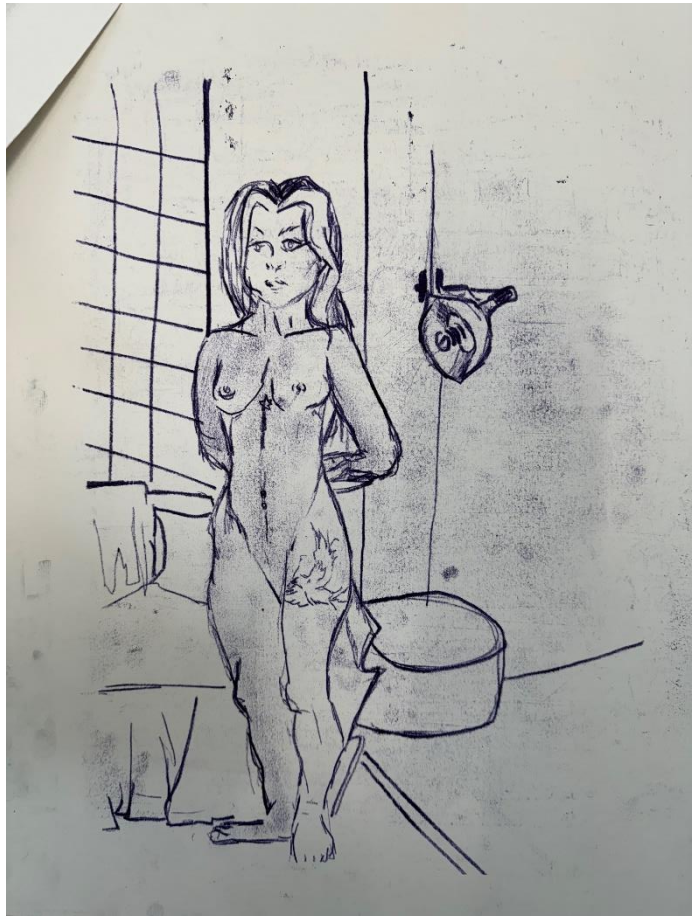
As you can see, these two pieces contain just as much, if not more, contrast as the first two life drawings I attached previously. But also in the more recent pieces, they contain much more of both the background and life model. Containing both aspects in my pieces have also helped me tremendously with my struggle of proportions of the body. Now with being capable of presenting both aspects of the piece, I can align the life model's body with the interior of the room to help with the proportions.

Mono Print Life Drawings

During this module, I used different materials in the life drawing lectures, one of these materials being mono printing. Where ink paper from the riso printing machine is used to make another piece of work. Using the ink paper, which comes in a variety of colours, we put a piece of blank cartridge paper on the ink and a blank piece of printing paper onto the cartridge paper, then draw onto to make a mono print. The three images below contain the pencil drawing I created on the ink paper, the back of the pencil drawing and the outcome of the mono print.

For this particular mono print, I used blue ink paper. I tried my best during this session to use undertone colours to represent the cool and warm tones of artwork. Especially skin tones, mainly because I was basing this on the life model that we worked with. I liked the outcomes of these prints; I have always liked mono prints because each print is unique to itself, and you can really make the same print twice.

What I liked about the mono prints also, is that they never turn out how you wanted and/ or how you expected them too. I found during these lectures that when looking at the final artwork, you can see the side of my palm from where I had been leaning to use the pencil, or even marks from the ink page.

There is not much shading in the outcome of this mono print, but I still liked the outcome of it. It was not intentionally supposed to resemble a cartoon like figure. But I still enjoyed doing it.

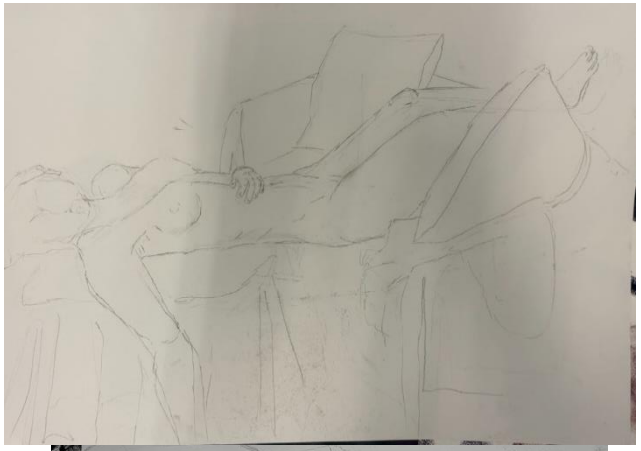
Photoshop Workshop.

During our digital media workshops, we had use of adobe photoshop workshops. After my discussion with Pyhillda Barlow where she suggested that in my own work, I should work more with basic patterns and bigger repetitive pieces. So during these photo shop workshops. I had previously taken photos of wallpaper samples and different patterns around the home then adjusted them in the adobe photoshop workshop to use in my study of work. I did not adjust the images by much, but sometimes it would just be to better the quality because the majority of the time, the images were taken off my phone so the image size was not great. These are some of the examples of the images I had taken and adjusted in adobe photoshop.

Pencil Life Drawings.

These are images of pencil drawings that I created in our life drawing sessions.

I have never been hugely fond off using pencils when it comes to my art work, mainly because of the lack on contrast and tonal value that it has conpared to charcoal. I spend a lot of time building layers when it comes to using pencils for drawings. The top image is a line drawing using one type of pencil and the image below is a drawing using multiple.



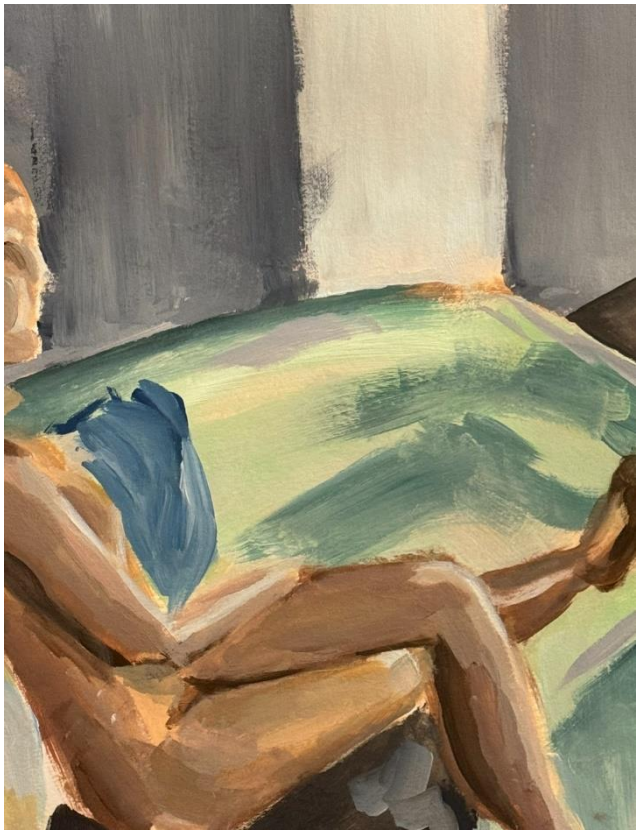
The top image is just a usual sketch drawing that I did, similar to the quick sketch when it came to charcoal, this helped me to develop just proportions without shading. Shade can be decieving when it comes to painting or drawings because it fore shortens the figure. In order to challenge myself, I made a sketch before working on a pencil artwork.

The bottom image is the next drawing I created during the same session. I spent around 45 minutes on this artwork just to put the time management into perspective. Where rather than using fine lines at first, I spent a lot of time just builing the layers of the piece. I started off with a HB and a 3B pencil at first just shading with the side of the pencil and building up the tonal value. Then after a while, I used darker pencils such as 8B to darker the deeper tones. I struggled to do this because no matter how many times I tried to built up the darker colours, it seemed stubborn to do and never went as dark as I wanted the colours and tones to go.

Acrylic Paintings

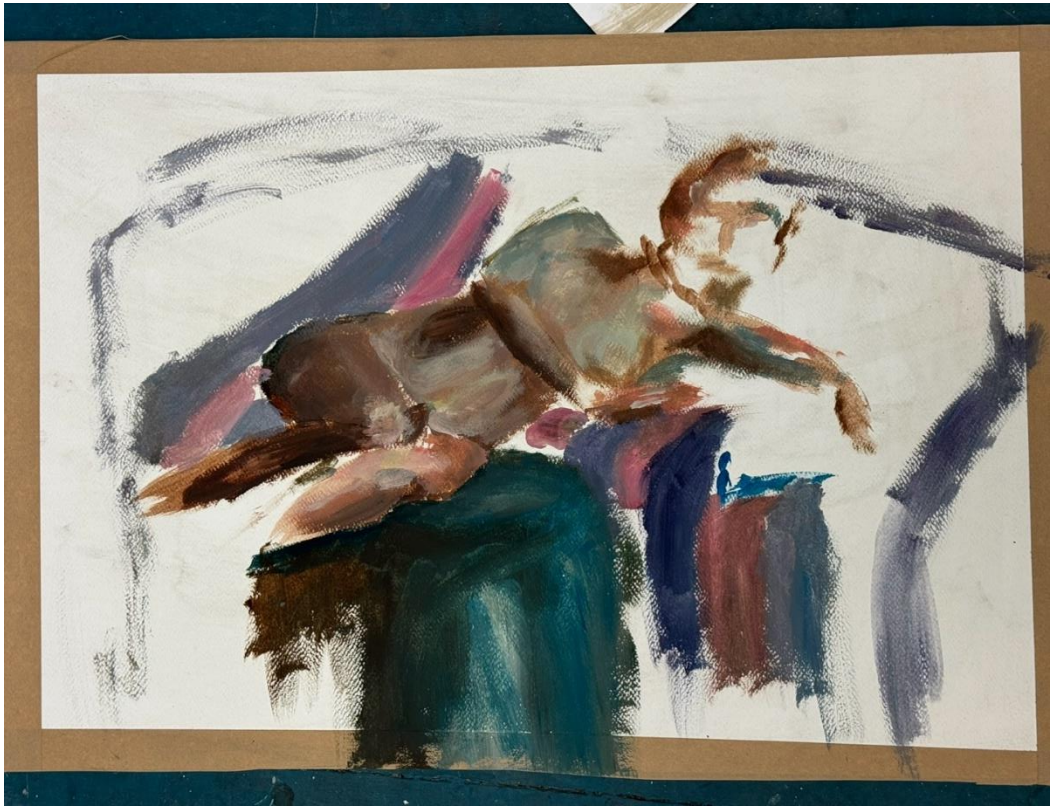
After using mainly charcoal and pencils in our life drawing sessions, we started to move onto painting. The paints that we used were acrylc paints. Usually in my art work, I use oil paints. So, when it came to using acrylic paints, I did struggle a little with the blend of colours because unlike oil paints; acrylic paints are known to dry much quicker and are quite hard to blend with other acrylic colours. I knew this before starting these lectures. So I started these paintings with basic primary colours and the colour white. As you can see, I started this painting by using acrylic wash before I even started painting the figure or furniture. This is because of what I was doing during my charcoal drawings where there was something there to start working on rather than a plain page. I feel like this strategy works because it seems to be less intimidating to paint on with a colur already on there. I used the colour blue for the acrylic wash because of the lighting in the background. Then, when I started the paint the chairs and life model, I used warmer tones because of the lighting in the foreground was different. I loved painting this piece, altought I struggled in the start, the painting came together because of the colours and tones used. You can also see where at one point I got the head proportions wrong in the painting and I had to go back and paint over it. I managed to fix this and overall, I like painting because it was out of my comfort zone but it was very different to my usual material studies.

What I also learned whilst using arcylic is how to paint with it technically. Like I previously mentioned, acrylic, compared to oil paints, is quite hard to blend due to the type of paint it is. So what I found after my first session is to try not to blend the paints as much but try to layer them more. For example, in the images on this page contains a acrylic painting that I had created where I went in wanting to try this idea. As you can see rather than blending the paints, I overlaped them. I started off with the darker tones in the painting and then because the paint drys quickly, after the first layer, I put the hgihlights on top of the painting. In my opinion, I think this benefitted the overall piece. Because considering I was able to paint this piece in the same amount of time as the first charcoal drawing that I have previously included in this PDF. I think that I had developed my skills in this module. I also included a close up of the painting just to show the progress and the brush strokes that I had done to layer up the painting. I wanted to keep this for reference for the future lectures.



Included on this page and the previous page is personally one of my favorutie acrylic paintings that I have made. I had the intention of making it as an acrylic painting similar to the two paintings that I previously included but, I started off with cool toned acrylic wash and I just liked the way it turned out. This position of the life model is a bit different to what is usually done so I spent a while trying to get the proportions of the figure right at first, I did this with the acrylic wash as you can see by the image below. I had taken this picture just to show to progress and for future use incase I need to remind myself where to start. But as you can see by the acrylic wash layer, I was trying to use this technique to get the measurements right before starting the other layers of the painting.

Acrylic Paint on Stretched Paper.



These photos contain two pieces of work that I made with acryic paint, but instead we painted on stretched paper rather than normal cartridge paoer. The image on the left is my frist attempt and the image on the right is my second attempt. I spent thislecture trying to get the skin tone right in the painting. The difference with the outcome of these paintings is that because the paper is strecthed with water beforehand. The paper does not absorb water, which is why you can see the arcylic wash has not worked as well as usual in these paintings. I still like the outcome of the paintings and would like to get better at using stretched paper but these were not my favourite acrylic paintings that I had done.

This was the last painting that I did before the semester ended. I used acrylic wash then layered acrylic on top of the painting and I personally liked he outcome of this. I also had taken a photo o the colour palette after I had finished the painting to just take a note of the tones and/ or colours I had created. Althought it was unfinished, I liked the tones and colours that I used compared to the other paintings. I like the layers of the highlights and shading compared to the other paintings that I had done. I wanted to include this in my study because although I did struggle with perfecting the colour tnes. I think that I did well with this one because I managed to create warmer tones, but also use cooler tones for places like the highlights and they still worked well together.

Overall, I enjoyed my use of time during this semester's Visual Enquiry 2 module. Because although it was out of my comfort zone. I think that with the practice that went into the lectures; I managed to excel and develop my work much further than I expected it would. In the future, I want to make more use of the life drawing lectures because I feel that it fits more with my practice, and I want to use more materials. I like the challenge when I go in, and I also like the outcomes of the artwork.