

Reflections of home

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Nation of Scraps

In this artwork, I have reinterpreted the Australian white ibis, colloquially known as the "bin chicken" as a symbol of resilience and cultural irony. My intention was to elevate an urban scavenger into an emblem of survival, reflecting the paradoxical beauty of Australian identity as humorous, self-aware, and profoundly enduring, to explore how national character is often reflected in the unconventional.

I composed the ibis as though it were a sainted figure, perched on a decorated plinth surrounded by stylised flora reminiscent of art nouveau ornamentation, the symmetrical framing a vibrant complementary palette of purples and oranges create visual unity that references the elegance of Alphonse Mucha, contrasting with the unglamorous reputation of the ibis, suggesting survival within an urban ecosystem.

While the piece initially invites amusement, it also encourages reflection on how we as Australians form identity through satire and self deprecation. The ibis, scavenging through the remnants of consumer culture, becomes a mirror for our own adaptability within environments, but by reimagining it through aesthetic elevation, I discovered how art can reframe cultural narratives, ultimately transforming an object of derision into a quietly heroic emblem of Australian life.

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This painting captures a deeply personal view of Adelaide's Rundle Mall, a place that has shaped much of my daily experience. As I prepare to move away for university, I wanted to immortalise the city through an image that encapsulates its rhythm, family, and quiet beauty. The compositions set after rain transform an ordinary urban scene into a reflective study of memory.

Through this work, I aimed to convey how light can evoke nostalgia and emotional resonance. The cool hues of dusk contrast with the golden window illuminations, symbolising warmth within the city's structural geometry. I used a palette knife to build layers of texture, giving the ground a tactile quality that recalls the sensation of walking through Rundle Mall on a damp evening, with the wet reflections distorting the figures, suggesting the fluidity of memory and how familiarity can dissolve into abstraction when one prepares to let go.

I was inspired by contemporary urban painter Jeremy Mann, whose manipulation of tone elevates mundane street scenes into emotional landscapes, making me recognise that landscape is capable of expressing longing and attachment, deepening my appreciation for the interplay between place and identity. This painting, grounded in the physicality of Adelaide architecture, serves as a metaphor for transition; a farewell portrait of a city I admire captured through light, rain, and reflection.