

## Self-ish Portraits (Pieter Bruegel)

by Jon Mugford

On first glance at the portrait, I had thoughts of a possible psychedelic man due to the pastel colourations blending through his face and his beard. It is impossible to tell the true age of this artist, as the blending of the face and the untrue form his face takes to make the person. However, I gather the sense that he is a rather old artist. It is possible that he was an artist in Eastern Europe during the 1700's; this insight has been made due to my prior studies on older artists, his positioning implying the use of a mirror to create the original portrait which in modern day would not always necessarily be used. Due to the nature of the painting and the way this artist is holding their paintbrush it can be felt as if he is an old master of sorts as suggested and known about art history, if my guess is correct about being of European decent, painting was one of if not the most popular art forms used by artists.

On first impressions of the portrait I gathered a warm feeling, through the atmosphere created by the pastel colours, and the use of lighter pastel colours to create his face to contrast to the darker, yet joyful, colours used to create his clothing and cap. Although, it can be noted that the further away from Pieter's face you move, the darker the colours seem to become, whether or not this was intended by the artist: Andrew Bracey. Pieter Bruegel was a Dutch painter and printmaker who was significant during the 'Dutch and Flemish Renaissance painting' or the Dutch Golden age of painting. He was known for his peasantry scenes. His birthdate seems to be unclear as it is listed between 1525 – 1530 in Breda now known as the Netherlands; his death date is however noted down as being 9<sup>th</sup> September 1569 where he was aged between 39 – 44 years old. This age and dates are useful as it potentially opens a window and potential historical insight on how life, scenery and day to day business may have differed from our modern-day suburban lifestyle where it is getting, slowly, harder and harder to find openings into history and what prior life was such as this.



This image shown is one of Bruegel's works called Penitent Magdalene. As I spoke about it shows a more peaceful and naturistic lifestyle. connecting this to my initial feeling of looking at the portrait done by Bracey, I get the same warming atmosphere most likely from the off-white colour of the paper behind the engraving print. Through research, I have found that the style of the self-ish portrait deviates from the artist's own work. I believe that this is a good

quality as it is a re-interpretation of what the artist, Bruegel, would have done.

Jon Mugford is an artist based in Lincoln, currently studying for his BA in Fine Art. Some of his achievements are at a young age, while studying art for A-level some of his work was chosen to be exhibited in a local gallery. His primary art practices are in pencil and etching/ engraving. Typically working on a large scale for his pencil work, however his etching work does not exceed the size of A4. His studies into art look at the historical and old master drawings of studying anatomy and sculpture work.