

Practitioner's Statement

What Defines You

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My practical titled "What Defines You?" examines the theme of social media. I was inspired to follow this theme after creating a brainstorm that was based upon the idea of self-identify. My initial inspiration came when I was out to dinner with my three friends who became engrossed with taking photos of their meals which they posted on Instagram and Facebook. I remember thinking to myself, "are we really so obsessed with showing people what we are doing in our lives over social media instead of enjoying the memory?" Is the saying actually true, "if you don't take a photo and post it, did it actually happen?" I found myself noticing more and more the effects social media has on our lives. Students at lunch are on their phone in silence instead of talking to one another. This compelled me to express how I felt about the negative effects of social media.

The artists that influenced my media choice and ideas were Banksy, Tom French and Bobby Hilleman. Banksy is a street artist and his real identity is unknown; he expresses a strong political voice through simple stencil technique compositions that are powerful in their composition placement. Tom French's work is unique in the way he uses the idea of layering different objects inside a skull and human figures to create an optical illusion using strong contrast with light and shade. Bobby Hileman is an artist who's silhouette drawings I discovered on social media. They relate to my concept of people creating a particular persona on social media that only shows the world the interesting things we do and does not reveal the harsh times we may face. I question are we really expressing our true identity?

My final piece has been placed on to 2 separate boards that have been shaped to represent the outline of a smartphone that signifies the large amount of time people spend on their phones. For the first board I have designed an x-ray background to simulate the metallic, reflective surface of a phone screen. The skeleton has been designed to portray a puppet by placing the limbs in a dramatic position. Using the skeleton as the figure, shows that we are all the same on the inside no matter what race, age or gender. The Instagram icon bar with numbers, is acting as the puppeteer controlling the skeleton with electrical wire string to connect to the theme of phones and technology.

The second board is comprised of rows of stenciled app icons that represent all the different profiles we create and apps that consume our phones. In the foreground a dark charcoal silhouetted figure is fading into the phone. The purpose of this figure is to represent that we are losing our identity as we create an unrealistic persona.

Overall I am very pleased with the result of my final piece as I was able to represent my theme and educe viewers own thoughts and feelings about social media. However, if I had left more white gaps in the skeleton ribs, the skeleton would stand out more and not blend so much into the background.