

Emotions

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My initial idea: 'The exploration of expression and the human condition visualised through portraiture and figurative art' had the intention of analysing artists who explore psychological meaning behind the expression with the human figure about the human condition. Originally, this idea had little personal relevance as it encompassed only surface level ideas of the human condition.

After analysing artists, Francis Bacon and Flora Borsi who both utilize their contrasting mediums to explore human emotions and expression with the human figure, it ultimately influenced the refinement of my first idea to focus on identity and emotion. By choosing a monumental time in my life where the key ideas of identity and emotion have been ever-present, I developed a stronger sense of personal relevance as my idea became more individualized: 'The emotions I experience whilst exploring my sense of identity as a young adult finishing high school'.

The refined idea further developed to become: 'The emotions I experience whilst exploring my sense of identity as a young adult during the last year at High School: frustration; anxiety; low mood and happiness'. My body of work seeks to communicate an individualized expression of the main four emotions I experienced during my final year at high school through four self-portraits. Each self-portrait reflects the facial expression of its corresponding emotion, and ultimately contrasts in medium, style, form and art process.

The eight artists I explored were Francis Bacon, Flora Borsi, Steve Salo, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Habiba Green, Katy Sarah Marsz and Guy Denning. Comparatively, my work shares very similar elements to the artists which influenced me with the main influences on my idea and its representation within my majors being Francis Bacon, Pablo Picasso, Katy Sarah Marsz and an additional artist, Rosanna Jones.

My first artwork is an acrylic painting with two superimposed heads, one facing straight on and the other facing in a 45-degree angle. Francis Bacon, the main influence for this self-portrait, incorporates artist elements which calibrate together to display his subject as distorted and emotion filled. I applied this idea within my artwork by using a dry brush stroke technique to create a similar distorted and blurred look, creating a smooth transition between the superimposed heads to look in motion. This technique assisted in creating a sense of unbalanced stress and anxiety within the portrait, whilst a harmonious red/pink colour scheme still embedded a warm, life filled subject. With additional inspiration from Flora Borsi's 'other works', I chose to make my work more abstract and superimpose to heads together as I believed it strongly resembled the feelings of hyperactive stress that was prominent throughout my final year of high school.

My second artwork is a pastel pencil drawing of myself with sharp, daggered glass-like pieces exposing sections of the face, hair and background. The Contemporary Artist, Rosanna Jones, creates abstract physical collages from her photography. This gave me the impetus to start experimenting with photography. After reflecting on my efforts, I discovered I had a large aura of potential and interest for photography, however, my lack of skills and time constraints denied successful work. Instead, I utilized Jones' layering collage technique to inspire my self-portrait by layering sharp, dagger-like pieces throughout the artwork and borrowed elements from her work such as shape, form and value. The layering of these sharp, glass-like pieces is symbolic of the shattering of emotions and coincide with my feelings of internal frustration experienced numerous times in my final year of schooling. With a neutral colour scheme in the background and foreground, substantial emphasis on the shattered glass illusion is achieved.

My third artwork is an acrylic painting depicting the subject with a large open-mouthed smile. For this self-portrait, my main influence was Katy Sarah Marsz who utilized expression and colour contrast to articulate the feeling of happiness. I applied this idea to my final by incorporating harmonious yellows and oranges within the face and neck, pinks within the garment, beige within the background, which is balanced by the dark detailing in the hair and crevices of the facial features. Unlike the first two self-portraits, I was heavily influenced by Marsz utilization of facial expression as a vehicle for articulating the chosen emotion. I borrowed this element within my work to truly show my impression of happiness at its highest peak, in mid laughter. This, in conjunction with the bright yellow tones being symbolically associated with lightness and happiness assisted my portrait in representing the emotion of happiness within this emotional time in my life.

My fourth artwork is a watercolor painting and depicts the model with an unimpressed expression, with her face slumping against her hand. Inspired by Pablo Picasso's blue period, this artwork has a blue monochromatic colour scheme to accentuate the depressing 'feel' of the portrait. I wanted successfully tie my body of work together with 4 unique yet colourful artworks and decided this monochromatic style fit seamlessly. This monumental time within Picasso's life and the way he expressed his depressive phase resonated with the less-severe depressive state that my last year of schooling drained out of me and hence inspired me to borrow artist elements embedded in his artwork. I believe utilizing blues, symbolizing darkness and sadness, in conjunction with strong facial expressions has a substantial influence on the 'low mood' feel of the portrait.

All four artworks highlight the contrasting elements of my psyche and guided me to express these corresponding emotions I have ventured through during my final year in high school. Through completing this body of work and my corresponding majors I have learnt and progressed with numerous artistic skills and visual arts learning such as: exploring charcoal as a medium with contrasting tools, exploring the depth of photography and editing, working in abstract and surreal styles, and accumulating knowledge for already practiced mediums like acrylic watercolor. Within this process, I have had a substantial amount of influence and inspiration from numerous artists and can appreciate how all artists' art processes stem from other artists and their artwork.

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