Undiagnosed

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Undiagnosed is an artist book about a personal 2-year pain journey, it is made from markers/ pen, tracing paper and leather.

As I keep a journal of everyday things including pain, it made sense to explore art books that reflected the records I keep. The title relates to the pain theme, as my condition is unknown, and either misdiagnosed or mysterious to the doctors.

Andrew Wyeth's Christina's World inspired a concept as at first glance it shows regular girl in a field. Deeper inspection reveals withered hands and arms, wisps of grey hair and a gloomy, washed out palette. This implies a further meaning and intrigues the audience. The painted lady, Christina Olsen suffered a generative muscular disease, forcing her to crawl around her home, trapped in her 'world'. The mysteriousness' inspired me to research more about Christina and connect. I replicated this in my work through my own hidden message through layering of materials, obscured texts and passages, leading to hidden meanings and provoking audience questions.

Ted Meyers also inspired me to research into emotions related with specific colours along with the documenting process. He uses physical signs to represent his subject's medical journeys and difficulties. By also using bold colours, I was enabled to represent the boldness and harshness of my pain and further support the documentary process. Meyers piece Scarred for Life is a mono print of a subjects scars revealing their journey.

The process began with diary pages transferred (acetone) to A5 water-colour pages and drawing over the top with images representing the pain scales (1-10). Markers and pens were chosen as they are common doodling materials relating to the everyday journaling. 300 gsm water-colour paper was more forgiving and enable me to control the bleeding/ running of the markers symbolising fluidity of pain and changing physical experiences. Belly leather was chosen for the front and back covers as it represents the location, skin casing of the pain and the information within.

The Rough 'tooth' of paper added textural contrast and further obscured text. Controlling the marker bleed was mostly successful, through desired symbolism and interruption of negative space however its unpredictability resulted in mixing of colours, producing brown. Transparencies with text over layered obscured pictures beneath.

I am happy with the picture flow showing scale count as it makes the pain experiences more realistic and confronting. By slowly introducing black and the amount in which it is used, illustrates the depth of the emotional toll of constant pain and creates a confronting force making the audience connect emotionally with sympathy and possible understanding.

 I'm also pleased with the bold contours and colour choices depicting the emotions clearly and the colours relating to them e.g. blue and sadness/ depression, red and anger/ pain. The leather cover is a smiling face illustrated accurately, to symbolize the happy 'mask' that I put on every day in order to not worry people.

Overall Undiagnosed is a successful piece that captures the desired message and symbolism.

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