

## *Distant Cultural Memory*

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The current global pandemic made me realise how distant I am with my family in Indonesia, inspiring me to use this folio to reconnect and explore my culture in a creative way. I initially wanted to portray the sense of disconnection, but capture the awe I feel when I see or experience aspects of my culture in everyday life. I wanted to show how I can feel 'in the dark' while surrounded by Indonesian culture, not knowing much history or the language. My main influence was Nguyen Minh Nam who portrays the struggle of self identity between both modern life and cultural traditions. He uses a mix of black and white and coloured figures to portray this disconnection, inspiring me to incorporate similar aspects into my final piece. For the design of my work, I drew inspiration from Jonathan Yeo's style of raw, streaky background but a refined focus on the subject's face.

The contrast makes the subject's face appear softer which portrays a sense of youth and innocence, inferring to the eagerness I felt as a child to exploring Indonesian culture. I used oil paint to depict myself, the child and the two neon signs, giving me the ability to create a realistic portrayal of the two figures and the glowing effect of the sign.

The unsettled nature of charcoal in juxtaposition with the contrast of rich permanence of oil paint portray the conflict I feel between my cultural history and contemporary lifestyle. The bold lights, painted in oils, demonstrate a brightness that comes from my aspiration to understand more of my history. While the murky charcoals allude to the guilt that I feel towards my cultural ignorance. This project has required me to research practitioner's that have expanded my awareness of self through an understanding of similar narratives. The artworks required comprehensive drawing studies in portraiture, proportion and scene composition to develop my response, this has grown my skill set in drawing and artwork design.

The inclusion of small symbols, such as the mask and national moto, encouraged me to research Indonesian traditions and culture, helping me learn and feel closer to my culture. My idea shifted from a general portrayal to a personal experience of the distant memory of culture I experience while walking through asian markets or past an Indonesian restaurant. This allows a deeper understanding and portrayal of memory as it reflects a personal account. The authenticity of an honest reflection adds integrity to the work, offering a connection to the viewer, through my vulnerability.