Pathetic Fallacy

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'Pathetic Fallacy' is a well-known stylistic technique which uses weather and seasons to outwardly reflect the inner experience of human emotion. As weather comes in ever-changing cycles, much like the waves of emotions we face throughout our lives, it is effective symbolism that allows a reflection of depth surrounding the human experience. Researched filmmakers such as Andy Goldsworthy and Makenna Greene use nature to convey their personal feelings, and the utilisation of pathetic fallacy in popular films such as The Lion King and The Shining communicate a sense of either hope (the clearing of clouds in the sky) or turmoil (a snow storm). This inspired me to create a short film piece to cinematically convey seasons of emotions humans experience.

Furthermore, the digital surrealist works of Aykut Ayadogdu and street art illustrations by Pejac were researched and analysed to unpack the concept of using pathetic fallacy in my portraiture. They utilise natural elements to exaggerate human feelings of emotion much like my final images. Stemming from my captivation around nature and human psychology, I decided to link two individual pieces of work to create a body of interconnected thoughts and experiences surrounding an adolescent growing up, challenging the idea that experiencing negative emotions is unhealthy. I photographed a 10-piece portrait series in which encapsulates the main five emotions teenagers experience stepping into adulthood and a story following the change of emotions and how every emotion one feels is important to developing as a person. Every two photos convey a different human emotion that is associated with growing up, including happiness, sadness, fear/confusion, anger and lastly peacefulness/fulfilment.

The second part to my body of work includes a 2 minute and 20 second film, communicating a cycle of emotions in one's brain through the visuals of weather changes in nature. The film transitions between the changing weather behind the silhouette of the same window, depicting a look inside one's mind, whether experiencing inner turmoil or joyfulness and serenity. The employment of shot types, angles and drawn animations throughout convey certain feelings clearer. This concept was developed from my personal feelings and experiences that my peers can also relate to, further enabling my body of work to connect and impact the viewer. Portrait photography was chosen as my medium because I believe it captures the authenticity of my subject in close up shots, clearly depicting her facial expressions and enhancing the effect of projections on her face. Colour psychology was important to unpack in the process of my folio, as connecting with the audience was vital to creating meaning to my art. I found dependence on the intensity levels of colour and tone to clearly evoke emotion, as subtle differences such as light blue representing happiness and dark blue representing sadness were found to be effective in conveying human feelings.

Experimenting with layering personal images similar to the works of David Hockney, especially Self Portrait (n.d.) inspired the use of overlaying projections in my final portraits as it adds depth and texture. Photographing subjects outdoors in comparison to low light indoors allowed me to conclude that I had more artistic control over lighting and the visual aesthetics, sparking developments generating my final projection idea.

As a unified work, my final portraits are well balanced and the vibrance of each projection contrasts against their black background.

The emotion of fear is juxtaposed effectively against the clarity of the rest of the images, however, utilising a low shutter-speed to communicate stress and inner turmoil, her blurred face looking both left and right. Using Photoshop to enhance colour even further and using correct framing and composition was vital to increasing its visual aesthetics. The sequence of photos travelling right tells a story, reinforcing the idea that emotions are a never-ending cycle that is important to experience. The repetition of uplifting images seen through yellow flowers and a blue sky represent that happiness is something that can't be experienced unless other emotions are, all of which need to be expressed and not suppressed. Ultimately, each of these portraits have been created with the aim to allow the audience to reflect on the role each emotion plays in their lives.

The process of filming happened over the course of this year, so that I could refine my skills and capture a variety of scenes amongst different progressions of weather. I began by shooting in both portrait and landscape in order to analyse what would be most effective. Landscape was decided on as it was a more cinematic approach, creating wider dimensions to depict each scene clearly, either in close ups showcasing texture and detail or long drone shots of organic shapes in landscapes. Similar to the works of short-film creator Makenna Greene, symbolism is heavily used throughout my film, such as raindrops communicating tears of sadness and fire representing a build-up of emotions. This pathetic fallacy conveys human emotion through something non-human: nature. Much like my portraits, the cycle of emotions is represented directly linked to the subject presented in them particularly through the repetition of weather through the same centred window silhouette, conveying the emotions experienced in one's mind.

Furthermore, the use of non-diegetic and diegetic sound was an important tool in upholding that sense of emotion, certain forms of classical music and natural sound effects utilised to enhance the effect of each shot. Additionally, hand drawn animations created using Procreate and Adobe Premiere Pro are presented throughout the film, creating juxtaposition between realistic scenes and imaginary elements which adds to its personable nature. My body of work titled Human Emotion communicates the importance of not only experiencing, but celebrating different feelings one may feel throughout their adolescent years, challenging the suppression of negative emotion.

Art should be able to interact with the audience with authentic meaning in an aesthetically beautiful way, in which my real-life images through photography and film are successful in, due to their minimalistic nature. Vibrant colours, high contrast, repetition and movement are evident in my pieces, upholding the importance of reflection.