

Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration



"Ladder in the Garden," Adam Stoner

Adam Stoner is a local MKE artist whose work "Ladder in the Garden" is reminiscent of expressionism with its sweeping strokes of black and abstract environment. It's primarily monochrome or analogous with its transition between deep orange and transparent orange, with accents of blue in the geometric shapes in the top left. The ladder on the left and the plant-like shapes and shadows on the right balance the piece asymmetrically, and the sweeps of black guide the eye in a clockwise motion across the piece.

"Devontay," Adam Stoner



"Devontay" is a mural in Milwaukee's Black Cat Mural Alley depicting a black male in an orange prison jumpsuit. This grim display portrays a pressing issue that black people in Milwaukee face all the time: the high incarceration rate of black people (males in particular). There are a few key elements to this piece, such as the hue-less skin and hands sterily contrasted against the orange background. Furthermore, there is little contrast between the orange jumpsuit and the background, making it seem as if he's blending in. Lastly, although this image doesn't show it, there is a thin white geometric outlining his face, a signature of Stoner's work.



Stoner's *Ladder in the Garden* and *Devontay* were two of the main inspirations for *Chrysalis*. In these images, I explored the different elements of both pieces by emulating the sweeps of black near the bottom of the image, adding the white polygon over her face, and by using the color orange as the main contrasting color.

1. <https://www.artsinmilwaukee.org/profiles/2036/>
2. <https://www.jsonline.com/story/entertainment/arts/art-city/2016/10/19/artist-hosting-community-discussion-mural/92424030/>

Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration

Wassily Kandinsky was an abstract expressionist painter in the 20th century. His work is known for its chaotic amalgamations of shape, line, and color. *Composition VII* was another inspiration for my *Chrysalis* piece for these reasons. Even through the disorder, there are elements of unity. For example, there are two hues that are the strongest in *Composition VII*: orange and blue. I noticed this while emulating Kandinsky's style while using watercolor gouache, as seen below. Orange and blue are complementary colors, which means even though they have the most contrast, they work together because of their difference. I used this in *Chrysalis* by making the main colors orange and teal green. While they aren't exactly complementary colors, they contrast enough to have been inspired by *Composition VII*.



Wassily Kandinsky. *Composition VII*. 1913.
<http://www.wassilykandinsky.net/work-36.php>



Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration

1. *Les Nymphes* Image Source: <https://fineartamerica.com/feature/d/le-vieillard-et-les-nymphes-georges-barbier.html>



George Barbier, *Le Vieillard et Les Nymphes*. 1922.

George Barbier featured many sapphic couples in his artwork. He used flat colors and stylized figures to create works with strong flowing movement. My personal favorite and the inspiration for *Adapt - Revise - Refine* is *Les Nymphes*, shown here. The figures showcases his whimsical style and use of horizontal movement.

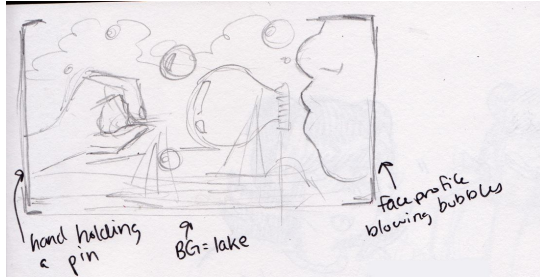


Elements of *Adapt - Revise - Refine* that were inspired by Barbier's *Les Nymphes*:

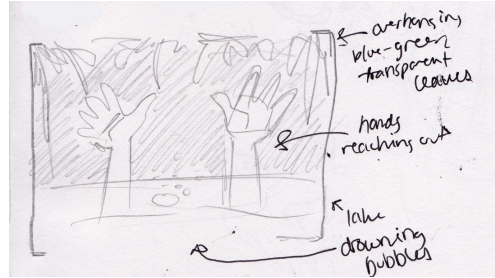
- the use of a singular, solid blue color as the skin-tone for all three figures
- the golden concentric circles representing the ripples in the water
- the orange butterflies flying around and even covering the figure's face
- the background of a galaxy or night sky
- using white as an accent, as seen in the flowers of *Les Nymphes* and the white dress in my piece

Barbier's use of butterflies in *Les Nymphes* inspired me to find similar features in the places around me. The "wings" the the Milwaukee Art museum fan out and are stark white against the blue of the lake, and they open and close throughout the day. I then researched butterflies native to Wisconsin and found the European Cabbage Butterfly, and used this butterfly to represent the Milwaukee Art Museum.

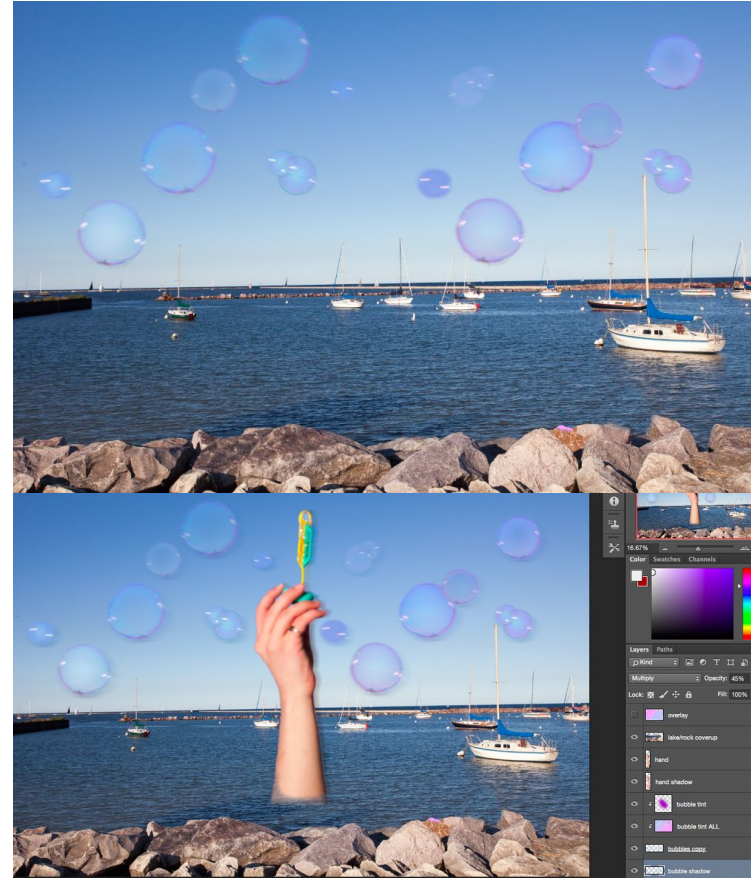
Critical Investigation: Development of Ideas



Each planning sketch for my digital collage, *Reminiscence*, involves bubbles, either from a bubble wand or someone drowning. Bubbles pop and are symbolism for fragility, or the eventuality of an end. Bubbles can also be containers and personally I have lived in the bubble that is my comfort zone and the state of Wisconsin. The first sketch shows someone about to pop a bubble with a pin as a symbol for a harsh wake-up call to thrust one out of their comfort zone.



In this sketch, only the hands are visible. The overall value of the background was imagined to be darker, although the final product uses Lake Michigan as its background and is a lighter value. The drowning person represents the intense anxiety I felt at the beginning of my freshman year. It felt like I'd been thrown into the deep end of a pool and the pressure of it all felt like I was drowning. The hand ended up being used in the final product but to represent rising above hardship.



Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration



Richard Hamilton

Richard Hamilton's *\$he* (1958-61) and *Hommage à Chrysler Corp* (1957) make use of faded transparent washes of color, mostly pink, creamy white, and orange. They use fragments of images such as the Chrysler car in *Hommage* and the disembodied wisps of a feminine figure in *\$he* and carry themes of consumerism and capitalism. Even the title of *\$he* makes use of the U.S. dollar sign, alluding further to themes of capitalism.

Conceptual Inspirations

I have friends who've had their own bedroom doors taken off by their parents who say because they've misbehaved they no longer deserve privacy. Additionally, some parents even go as far as to install spyware on their children's phones and control everything they're doing. However, this only creates an environment of fear and mistrust for both the children and the parents. This is why I chose to have two figures, who represent the parents, standing in an empty doorway. Additionally, other symbols of surveillance or being watched are the flies on the wall, the 3 overlapping eyes, and the text that says "BIG BROTHER" in reference to Big Brother from 1984.



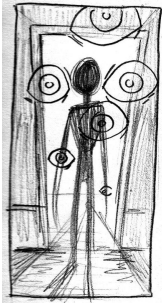
Richard Hamilton.
Hommage à Chrysler Corp. 1957.



Richard Hamilton.
\$he. 1958-61.

1. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hamilton-hommage-a-chrysler-corp-t06950>
2. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hamilton-he-t01190>

Critical Investigation: Development of Ideas



- 6 disembodied eyes
 - ↳ looks trite
- Single figure or 2?
 - ↳ single is centered
 - ↳ double repr. parents
- long distorted doorframe
 - ↓ no door
 - ↓ add doorhinges?



- Figures = too short / look childlike
- text looks awkward
- eyes on figures are also trite / what's not as cliché?
- Flies on the wall
 - ↓ being watched



- diagonal mmt from eyes to text
- what if I made the fig. on the right shorter?
- text going off page
- these eyes look less cliché ; more intentional

Sketches + Experimentation

The first sketch for *Surveillance* was tall and narrow in order to make the viewer feel as if the figure in the piece is actually looming over them. The disembodied eyes here were the beginnings of the most important symbol in the piece; however, in this sketch they looked trite and I strived to find a different way to portray them.

The second sketch was the first to include two figures and the text "BIG BROTHER". The eyes still looked trite on the figures' faces and the figures themselves were too short to represent overbearing adults. This sketch also includes the flies, alluding to the phrase "fly on the wall".

The last sketch is the closest to the final outcome. It includes the 3 eyes on the left, the cut-off text saying "BIG BROTHER" in the bottom right, and the two figures in the doorway. However, the final product has the figure on the right as shorter to add to the diagonal asymmetrical composition.



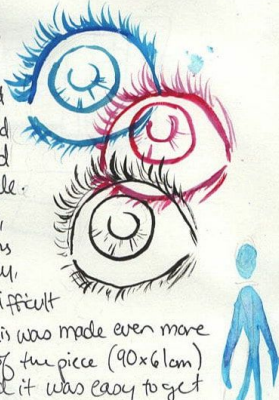
Experimentation consisted of examining how to layer gouache to convey depth and shadow. The shading was accomplished by setting a light wash of pink and purple on the walls, letting it dry, and then putting a wash of grey and purple over it. The doorway is left white to indicate where the light source is. When deciding on which symbols to use, I drew inspiration from George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* and Salvador Dali's *The Persistence of Memory*.

Reflecting and Refining: Surveillance





REFLECTION

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS

Throughout the creation of this work, "Surveillance," I was challenged by a medium that I was only kind of familiar with, and even then I'd only ever used it on a smaller scale. Gouache is a watercolor paint that, although has great capacity for being opaque or transparent, dries quickly, making smooth gradations more difficult and forcing me to work faster. This was made even more challenging by the overall size of the piece (90x61cm) because it required more water and it was easy to get distracted working on one small section. If I were to attempt this piece from another approach, I would make it both taller and narrower to emphasize the looming of the figures in the doorway in the presentation of the work. Alternatively, I might revisit this on a smaller scale, although that would diminish the effect of the looming figures. It would be an interesting contrast, however. Lastly, composition was a challenge because it was difficult to decide which symbols were necessary, significant, and contributed to the meaning. Sometimes less is more, and I experimented with adding and subtracting a few different symbols before reaching a piece that was satisfying.



SYMBOLISM & MEANING

-  eyes - watching, being watched
-  figures - parents/guardians, watching, an audience
-  empty doorframe - lack of boundaries, lack of privacy
-  flies - phrase "fly on the wall," spying, spyware



COMPARE & CONTRAST

SIMILARITIES

- transparent washes of color
- abstraction
- expressionism
- disconnected from reality
- "She" and my piece both include disembodied floating eyes

DIFFERENCES

- my piece features two human figures, while "Ladder in the Garden" and "Homage à Chrysler" only feature objects and "She" only has the disembodied parts of a woman
- my piece has 3 floating eyes, while "She" only has 1
- my piece has a wider range of hues than all 3, which focus primarily on 1-2 hues with varying shades of value



Richard Hamilton. "Homage à Chrysler" (1967) Richard Hamilton. "She" (1951-52)



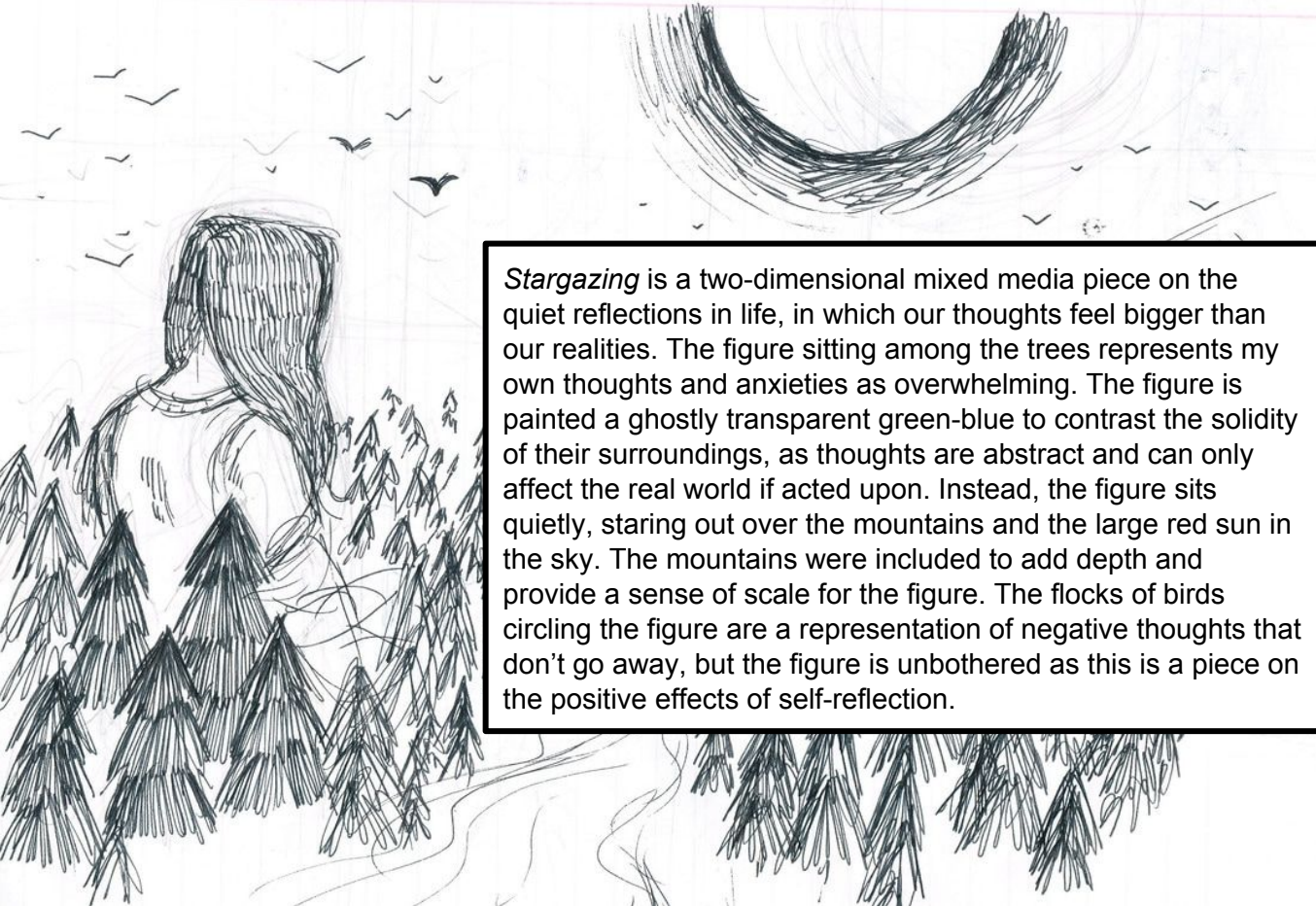
Adam Stoner. "Ladder in the Garden." (2016)

Themes and Symbolism

"She" and Homage à Chrysler Corp by Richard Hamilton and Ladder in the Garden by Adam Stoner inspired my use of transparent washes of color and the disembodied floating eyes, while the dystopian themes of surveillance in 1984 by George Orwell inspired me to portray how teenagers are constantly watched to the point of harm.

While it's important to watch out for children to make sure they're being safe, overprotection can be just as dangerous as no protection. The central idea around my research was how to portray being watched that felt as if it were disconnected or seemingly unreal.

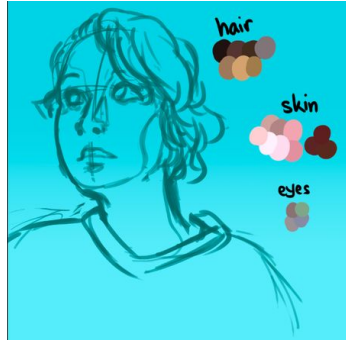
Communication: Ideas and Intentions



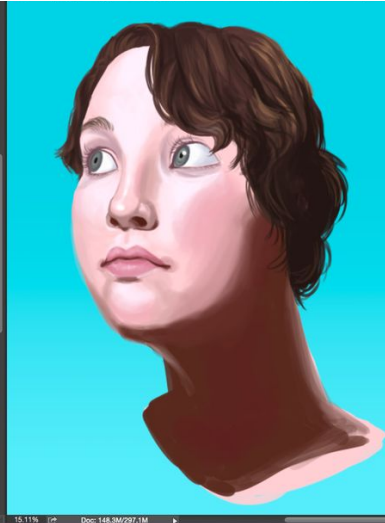
Stargazing is a two-dimensional mixed media piece on the quiet reflections in life, in which our thoughts feel bigger than our realities. The figure sitting among the trees represents my own thoughts and anxieties as overwhelming. The figure is painted a ghostly transparent green-blue to contrast the solidity of their surroundings, as thoughts are abstract and can only affect the real world if acted upon. Instead, the figure sits quietly, staring out over the mountains and the large red sun in the sky. The mountains were included to add depth and provide a sense of scale for the figure. The flocks of birds circling the figure are a representation of negative thoughts that don't go away, but the figure is unbothered as this is a piece on the positive effects of self-reflection.



Critical Investigation: Acquisition of Skills



Shown here is the base sketch for my piece, *Hard Times*, including the chosen color palette for each area of the face. I used this portrait as an opportunity to practice drawing proportionate facial features from a slightly different angle, as is shown in the studies to the right.



To the left is a comparison between my reference photo and the portrait itself. Drawing digitally is not new to me; however, painting realistically is. One challenge I faced was using the colors of the reference photo while still matching them to the environment. In these process pictures, the neck is much too dark for the surrounding area and was lightened considerably to look more natural in the final piece.

FACIAL FEATURES

My face has a very round shape with very few angles, so the majority of the foundational shapes for the sketch were ovals or circles. Other features, such as the bridge of my nose, were rectangles.



Additionally, the lighting in the reference picture I chose was harsh and gave more solid shadows to the jaw, cheeks, and neck.

round, curved, organic

Drawing at a $\frac{3}{4}$ angle forces you to not think about symmetry, but about proportion. To begin, I always lay down a few curves that dictate where I draw the features and at what angle.



Media Choices and Exploration



While printmaking, I wanted to breach my comfort zone by attempting a series of monoprints. I attempted two methods of monoprint. The first is where ink is rolled onto a plate, a paper is laid on top, and you use the end of a paintbrush to draw or trace an image on top. The second was where after the ink is rolled out, you take a paper towel and scrape away at the ink. The results of both methods can be seen above. I am partial to the first method as it produces a clear image and can be used to trace images that have already been made. The second method adds an element of unpredictability, but is effective in creating bold contrast.

I attempted to create small rubber stamps out of regular pink erasers. The results were promising, but since I did not have a regular ink stamp pad and instead had to use acrylic paint, the stamps were not solid. It is, however, a technique that I am willing to try again in the future.



Manipulation of Media: Digital/Lens-Based



Skills, Techniques, and Processes

When I began the course, I was vaguely familiar with Photoshop and how to paint digitally. While experimenting for my digital collage, titled *Reminiscence*, I was able to refine my photo editing skills through class instruction and trial and error.

The first image was an imitation of physically cut-out collage using the select tool to cut out the image of my friend while the layer with the flowers was underneath. The two different hues of green were similar enough to have unity, but concentrated in value enough to clearly define the outline of their figure.



The second image used a combination of all of the tools I'd experimented with so far. The select and fill tools were used to create the black silhouettes in the foreground, I erased the middle of the middleground and set the layer at a lower opacity, and left the background as is.



At first I was going to use cool colors to fill in the abstract shapes as a contrast to the warm background, but the high saturation of both hues was too bright.



Manipulation of Media: Digital/Lens-Based



Birthday party supplies



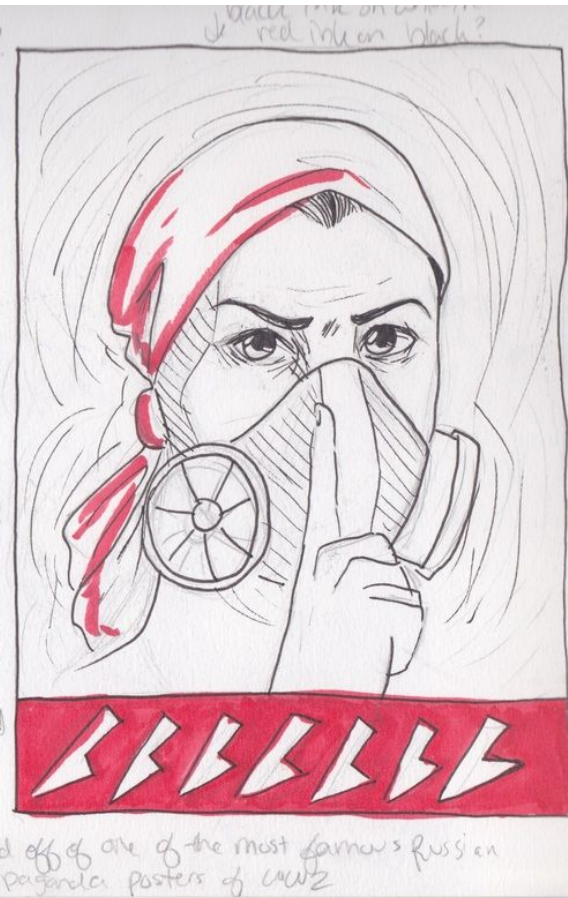
Re-decorating the cake

Conceptual Qualities

The party setting was meant to express the pressure that comes with cisnormative gender roles. Birthdays are meant to be fun and exciting, whereas gender roles in a heteronormative and cisnormative society tell people to conform to their places and be happy about it. The phrase "FREE THIS MEAT" came from my own brainstorm session where I tried to come up with simple slogans such as the popular and powerful SILENCE = DEATH slogan in regards to the AIDS epidemic. The original phrase was "FREE THIS MEATSUIT" as meatsuit is a term that feels like it disconnects someone from their body, like their body isn't them it's just something they wear, and was shortened to create symmetrical balance on the front of the cake. This piece is half-photography series and half-performance piece, as it is primarily pictures of myself as I eat a piece of the cake.



Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration



The inspiration for this piece was WW2 Soviet Russia propaganda. Propaganda is a push for conformity, to unite a group under a common goal-- or, in most cases, against a common enemy. The poster by Nina Vatolina was a caution against gossip, as the enemy could be anywhere, and the poster I used as reference for the pose is a call to arms. My piece, *The Rebellion of Art*, is my own call to arms by using a confirmative type of media to promote the message of nonconformity. The message of what kind of rebellion is left intentionally ambiguous.



Keep your mouth shut!
Nina Vatolina, 1941.
<http://sovietposter.blogspot.com/2007/12/silence-is-go.html>



USSR propaganda poster that reads: "Go West!", Artist Unknown, 1942
www.sovietposters.com

The sketch featured to the left is heavily inspired by the poster by Vatolina and uses the woman as an icon. The woman looks stern and tired, which I attempted to replicate to be someone who is fed up. The pose, however, is not dynamic enough, so I used the pose from the "Go West!" poster with the woman as an icon.

Manipulation of Media: Two-Dimensional Forms



Skills, Techniques, and Processes

To experiment with drypoint, I made multiple prints with varying degrees of ink still on the plate before printing. By not completely clearing the surface of the plate of ink before printing, I was able to create a grunge texture over the print that made it look weathered and worn. I replicated this again with varying degrees of success and then began to experiment with gouache paints. Gouache is a type of paint that can be very opaque or very transparent depending on how much water you add. I tried using a splatter paint method, painting the entire background, and painting red stripes similar to the ones on my sketches. The diagonal red stripe was the most successful and was included in the final product.

Reflecting and Refining: The Rebellion of Art



Keep your mouth shut!
Nina Vatolina, 1941.

<http://sovietposter.blogspot.com/2007/12/silence-is-gold.html>



USSR propaganda poster that reads: "Go West!", Artist Unknown, 1942

www.sovietposters.com

The lines of *Rebellion* are clean with intentional smudging to fill the negative space and the inspiration is easily recognizable in the piece. However, I do feel as if I should've kept the soup can as a tribute to Warhol, as it would've furthered the theme of propaganda, Warhol being an artist who used repetition to represent propaganda-like media and who also went against conventional artistic norms.

Compare & Contrast

Similarities:

- Red is one of (or the only) main hue(s)
- Similar poses
- Same figure, complete with red headscarf
- Asymmetrical balance
- Both display a message of fighting back or uniting

Differences:

- My piece features no text yet both of my inspiration pieces do
- My message is about rebellion against conformity in art while the message brought by the inspiration pieces is about conforming to unite against a common enemy
- Both inspiration pieces feature more than one hue while mine is single-color



Manipulation of Media: Two-Dimensional Forms



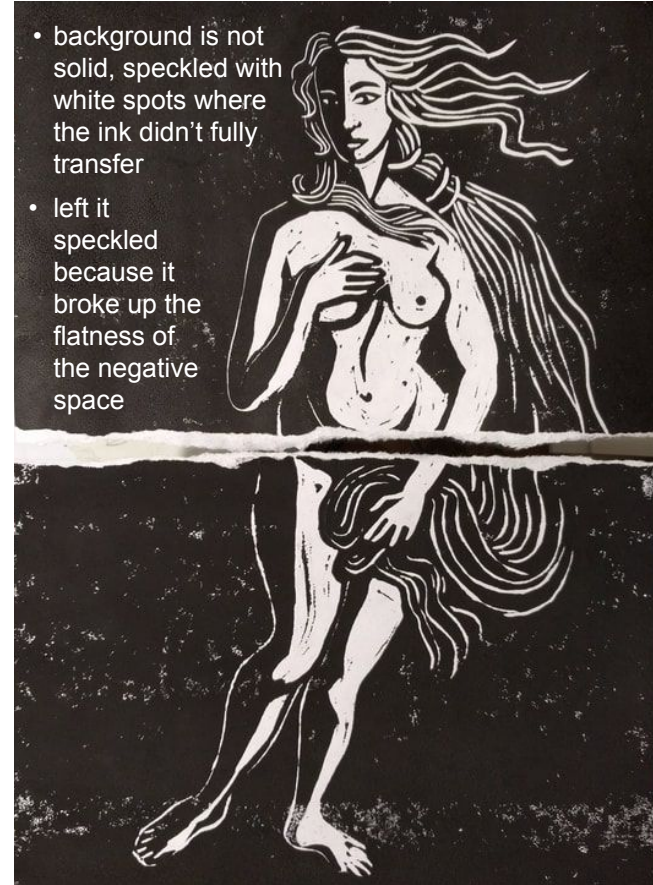
Refinement of Skills

Printmaking is one of my favorite mediums and my skills in this area have evolved over the course of the program. One of my first projects was a block print titled *The Age of Enlightenment*, or simply *Enlightenment*, and was carved with great attention to even minute detail. I used a black permanent marker to fill in the areas I had already carved out in order to better envision what the final product would look like printed. *Perceived Epitome* was made using the icon of Venus from Sandro Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*, and is the last project I made for my body of works. I evolved my printmaking skills by using this as the backdrop for the final piece instead of the final piece itself.

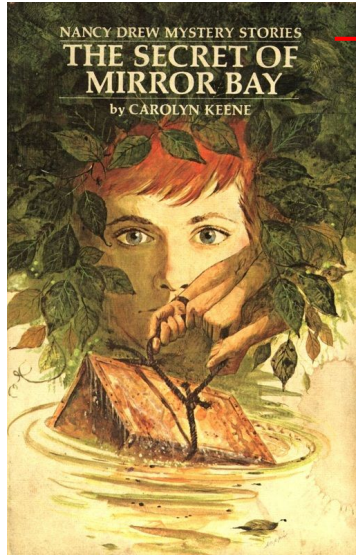


Enlightenment and *Perceived Epitome* were created a year apart. In *Enlightenment*, I used an exaggerated style inspired by German Expressionism. The clearly outlined nose and the shadows of the sunken cheekbones were defining characteristics, as I wanted to fill every space with some kind of carving. In *Perceived Epitome*, however, I let the majority of the work be negative space. The shadows on the figure are solid and simplified, with the hair being the most detailed aspect.

- background is not solid, speckled with white spots where the ink didn't fully transfer
- left it speckled because it broke up the flatness of the negative space



Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration



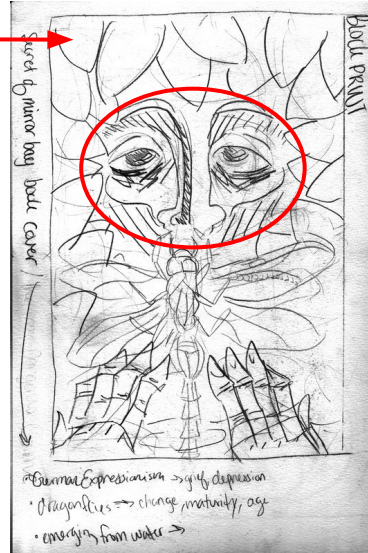
Nancy Drew: The Secret of Mirror Bay by Carolyn Keene (Illustrator Unknown, 1972)

http://www.ndsleuths.com/t_hesleuthpg9feb05.html



Max Pechstein, Head of a Sailor (Woodcut, 1922)

http://www.spaightwoodgalleries.com/Pages/Exhibitions_German_Exp.html



This sketch is the closest to the final product. Insect wings are usually iridescent and full of color so I felt it would be interesting to portray them in black and white.

The Enlightenment of Age was inspired by German Expressionism and the cover of a Nancy Drew novel I've had since I was a kid, "The Secret of Mirror Bay," by Carolyn Keene. It represents looking back on the changes in your life from an older perspective. I'm very young, so I decided to look at this project through a different point of view. The title is a twist on the Age of Enlightenment, an age of change and revolution.

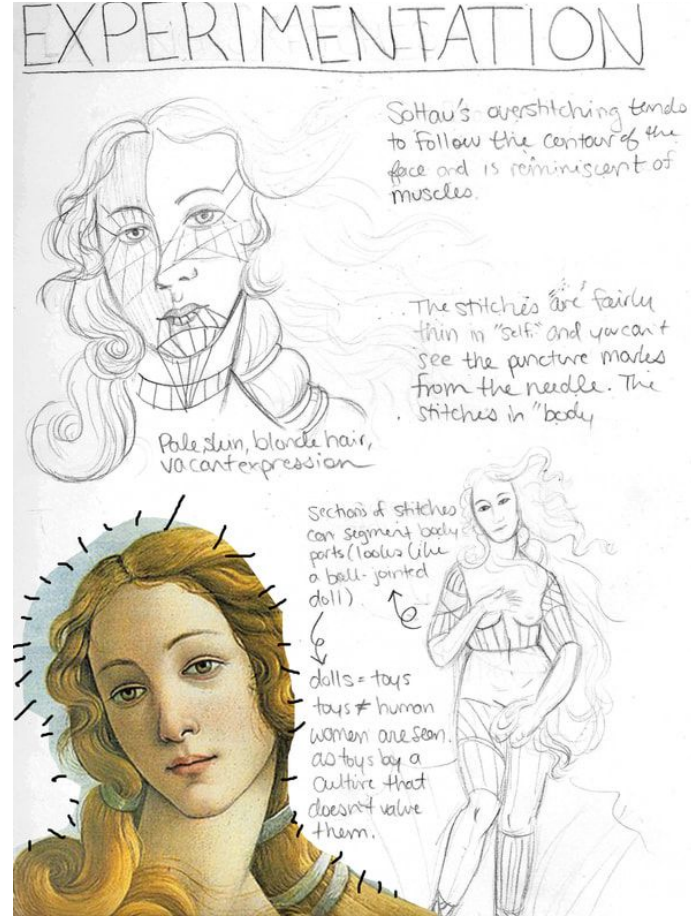
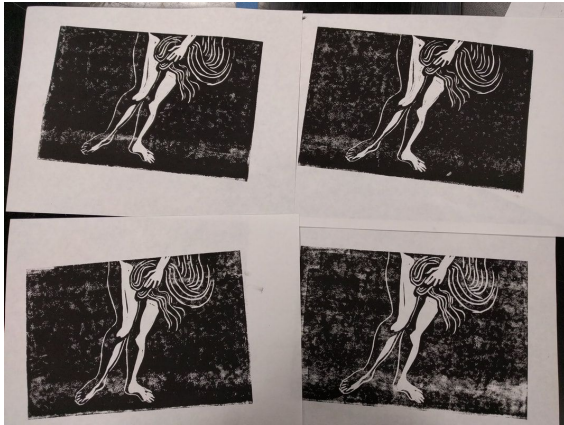
My inspiration stemmed from the German Expressionist works of Käthe Kollwitz and Hermann Max Pechstein, as well as the cover of a Nancy Drew book I found at a garage sale when I was around 10. The book was "The Secret of Mirror Bay", pictured here, and as a kid I believed Nancy was witnessing fairies pull something out of the lake because of the skewed perspective (Nancy's face being very large in the background while the subjects in the foreground are very small). While this was untrue, the illustration itself is very whimsical, and I felt it was a good contrast to the darker themes of German Expressionism.

Communication: Ideas and Intentions



Perceived Epitome is a mixed media collage, block print, and over stitching that features the icon of Venus from *The Birth of Venus* by Sandro Botticelli. It's about the Euro-centric perception of beauty that is forced onto people across the world. The collage elements and *overstitchings* were inspired by Annegret Soltau's series *self and bodyopenings*.

The Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli represents Venus, the god of love and beauty, as the epitome of human perfection. In this depiction, she's pictured as a slim white woman with fairly blonde hair-- an obviously Euro-centric perception of beauty. However, because this is such a pervasive depiction of beauty throughout Western culture (and has even bled into the rest of the world), it's an image that's been pushed onto others without regard for their own cultures and societies. There is no ideal beauty standard, as beauty is a fluid concept. It's an abstract construct that, despite its nonexistence, is something we all strive for.



Communication: Ideas and Intentions



-speech bubble could be bigger
-needs better perspective



-different perspective
-shows more of the room
-white or black walls?

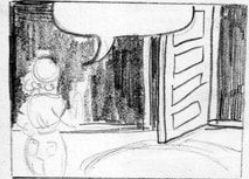


-for speech bubbles I can either leave it empty, cover something in, or carve the '!!?' on a smaller block like a stamp

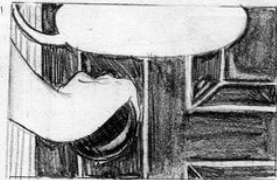
hard-letter text



-if I have her on the right in the 2nd panel, she needs to be on the left in the 1st



-perspective is off! has to be woman > door
-do we need to see the room?



-closer to what I'm looking for, but not quite
-I could just do white outlines for the rest of the door



Skeletons in the Closet is a block print about the mass-produced epidemic that is suicide among LGBT+ youth. My beginning sketches were to have two panels, one above the other, in a comic-style progression. However, only the second panel of the woman screaming made it into the final work. I was disappointed that I couldn't incorporate the original comic page style, but feel that the repetition works better with only the second print. At first I was worried that without the first panel, indicating the closet, the theme wouldn't be carried as well and the title wouldn't make sense. However, I believe it only made the overall product stronger *because* it is less obvious.



Critiques from my peers revealed that before they read the exhibition text, some thought that "Oh, the horror!" was a sarcastic phrase to due its cliché nature, and to some extent they are correct. It's meant to be a satirical reflection on how we as a society react to mass-produced tragedy as we slowly become desensitized to it. Additionally, a college professor who was critiquing my work confessed that the work made her smile and feel like laughing, though she didn't know why. This further solidifies the entertainment aspect of tragedy. We as a society delight in a gruesome story, and the various reactions that this work has garnered further adds to its ironic meaning.

Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration

ROY LICHTENSTEIN

Roy Lichtenstein was a groundbreaking artist of the **Pop Art** era with his iconic recreations of comic panels. Similar to Chuck Close's **large scale** portraits, Lichtenstein's reproductions are **blown up** and taken out of context in satire.



WHAM!



Lichtenstein's use of images of industrial mass media relates to my message about **LGBT+** teen suicide in that suicide is a mass epidemic that **repeats** itself all the time.

① Crying Girl, 1963
② Happy Tears, 1964

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD



Night of the Living Dead is a 1968 horror film that features an early depiction of **zombies** as slow-moving, flesh-eating **groats**. One of the main characters, **Barbra**, shown here, is trapped in a farmhouse with **6 other people** while a horde of the living dead surrounds the house. Part of the appeal of **this** movie (at least to me) is that it shows that **people** can be just as scary as the **monsters**.

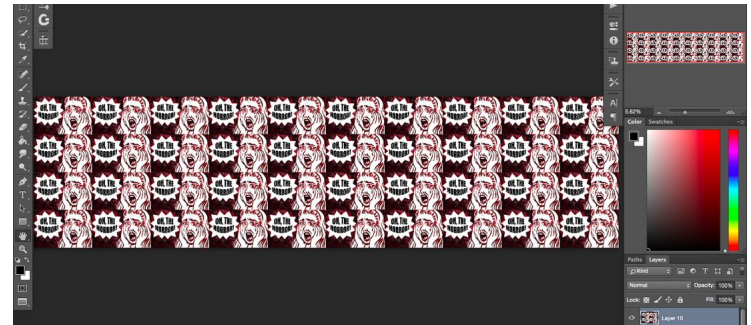
Andy Warhol

This detail from Warhol's *The Last Supper* was the inspiration to repeat my print in a massive strip. Warhol used themes of mass media and obsession, portraying religious obsession by repeating the image of Jesus Christ in *The Last Supper*. Combining Lichtenstein and Warhol cemented the theme of mass production and satire in my work. Suicide in the LGBT+ community happens on such a massive scale due to the prejudice that pervades our culture, and it has become almost like an industry. We feed off of the tragedy and become desensitized to the actual horror of the subject. Repeating the phrase "Oh, the Horror!" sounds like a sarcastic exaggeration when it's really about actual tragic events.



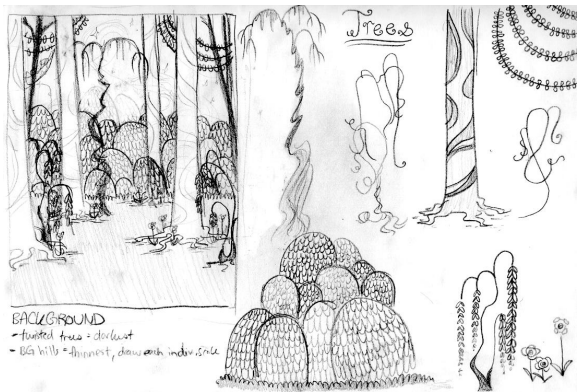
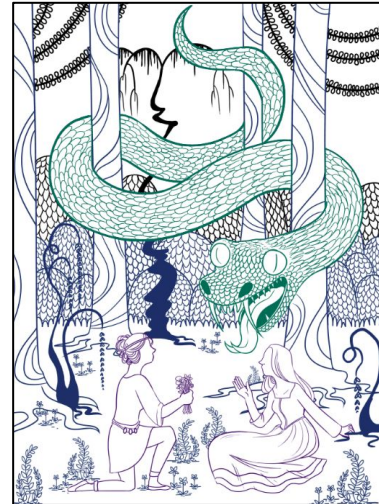
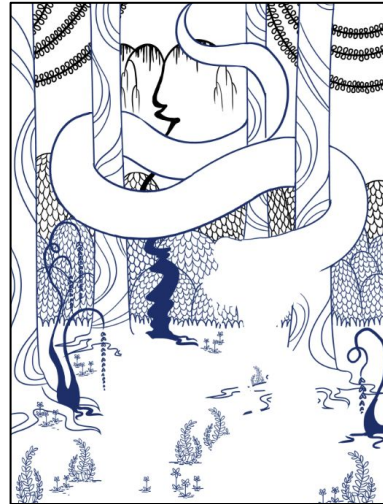
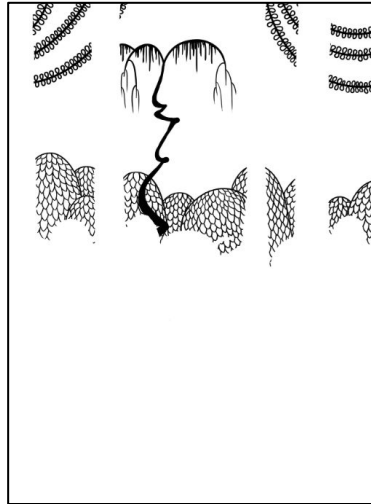
Andy Warhol. *The Last Supper* (Detail). 2009.
<http://elopedelart.canalblog.com/archives/2009/03/18/13019839.html>

1. <https://news.masterworksfineart.com/2017/10/19/a-closer-look-roy-lichtenstein-cryin-g-girl-1963>
2. <http://lichtensteinpaintings.com/happy-tears/>
3. Romero, George A, director. *Night of the Living Dead*. 1968.



Mixing Media: Digital and Three-Dimensional

Or Forever Hold Your Peace is a laser engraving on wood depicting the homophobia that LGBT+ people still face even after equal marriage rights legislation. It was inspired by the works of Virginia Frances Sterrett, a fairy tale illustrator in the 1920s. I emulated Sterrett's style through the use of loops, intricate plants with minute detail, and was directly inspired by her illustrations of a dragon and used that as reference to create my snake of jealousy.

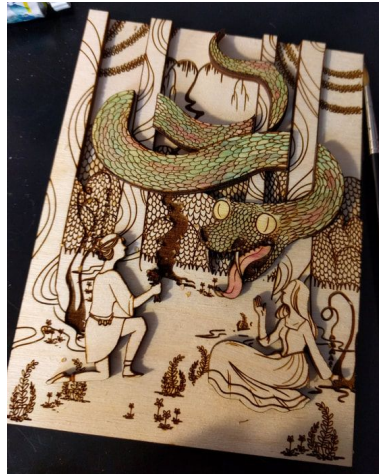


The illustration was drawn on a 21.6 x 28 cm file at a resolution of 300 pixels per inch. First, I lined the background layer with a solid black brush, detailing each leaf. Using a sketch for the middle layer, I erased or didn't draw in the areas that would be covered so it wouldn't waste time engraving things that weren't necessary. I repeated this for each of the layers, but used a different color for each: black for the background, blue for the middle, green for the snake, and purple for the two women. The laser process took approximately 5 hours, at which point I spent around another hour peeling off all of the masking tape so I could paint it. I painted the layers individually with transparent gouache, slowly building up the color and letting it dry. Lastly, I glued the layers together using wood glue and a clamp so it set properly.

Mixing Media: Digital and Three-Dimensional



Finished laser cut pieces still with drafting tape on them.



Beginning the first layers of gouache.

At first, I shrunk the piece to be 11.5 x 15cm to test the material and time elapsed for the cut and engraving. It took approximately 3 hours, give or take. Afterwards, I experimented with painting gouache over it. The pink in the snake scales was originally a mistake, but contrasted nicely with the green and broke up the monotony of the scales.

Sterrett Illustrations: <http://artpassions.net/sterrett/>



Medea flees high over the City, Virginia
Francis Sterrett



Cadmus Slays the Dragon,
Virginia Francis Sterrett



Blondine and the Tortoise,
Virginia Francis Sterrett



The forest, Virginia
Francis Sterrett

Similarities

- looping, curving, overlapping lines
- Similar symmetrical balance/central composition
- intricate scales/leaves
- night-time sense with many blues, purples
- transparent washes of color

Differences

- there's a snake instead of a dragon in my piece and it's green with hints of pink as opposed to purple and blue
- Sterrett's work still has much more minute detail than mine
- Sterrett's work has darker values and more contrast in "Blondine" and "Cadmus"



Or Forever Hold Your Peace, Julia Green

Style and Technique

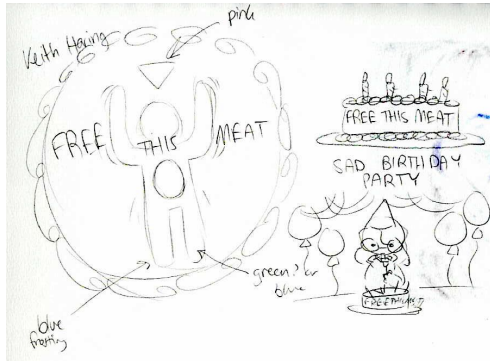
While I was successful in simulating Sterrett's style, we have vastly different techniques. Sterrett worked on illustration paper with ink and watercolor, while I used digital illustration and a laser for a 3D wood cut with gouache for color. The 3D aspect of the piece gave it physical depth and reminded me of a pop-up book of fairy tales. While my values are not as dark and solid as Sterrett's, they emulate the style well and were a great source of inspiration for the color scheme.

Refining and Reflecting: FREE THIS MEAT



Keith Haring, Pop Shop Quad I, 1987

<http://www.haring.com/!/art-work/810#WpQPthPwZE4>



“FREE THIS MEAT” is a digital photography series that connects the feeling of gender dysphoria eating you from the inside to the literal act of eating. It was inspired by famous LGBT+ artists and gay iconography such as the pink triangle, a reclaimed symbol of oppression from the Holocaust. I was directly inspired by Keith Haring's simple cartoonish style and the story of how it went from graffiti to museum work. His work was also intrinsically linked to the gay community and much of his work was to raise awareness of the AIDS epidemic. The bright figures that can express movement while still being so simplistic is part of why I love his work so much.



This cake featured in this series has symmetrical balance both on top and on the sides with the yellow and red candy letters. In fact, dark red dominates each photo with yellow accents and the lettering was a perfect fit for that. Lighting was very important to this piece, as I wanted it to have the surreal washed-out yet contrasted vibe that strange old photographs (usually with timestamps) give off. The small lines around the figure were meant to mimic the lines in Keith Haring's work that give those little cartoons their vibrant movement. The thick smooth lines are also reminiscent of Haring's work, as the figure was directly inspired by “Pop Shop Quad I”. The space around the figure was just as important because I did not want to make the top feel so crowded that it lost its simplicity. If I had to redo this, I would try to make the frosting as smooth as possible, as the strangely smooth texture of cake icing not only makes it look cleaner but helps bring out the simplicity of what's drawn on top. I would also try to set up some more professional lighting because while I do love the reds and yellows, I would love to experiment more with a dark background and high contrast lighting.

Development of Ideas: Adapt - Revise - Refine

Skills, Techniques, and Processes

Adapt - Revise - Refine is a triptych in acrylic paint. To the left are examples of different color schemes I was considering. In the end I decided to use the pink and purple hues for the hair color as they're closest to my real-life hair color and the contrast of warmer hues of purple and pink to the cool greens and blues is visually appealing. The butterflies were also made to be orange as orange and blue are complementary colors and the butterflies in question are meant to be monarch butterflies, butterflies famous for their migration patterns. As a whole the piece is asymmetrically balanced, but looking at each panel individually reveals symmetry. I'm still working on breaking away from symmetry and exploring asymmetrical compositions.

I experimented with different acrylic painting techniques to create a galaxy in the background of my paintings, first by simply dabbing colors onto my canvas with mediocre results, and then by using this tutorial with much better results. By switching from dabbing paint with a brush to a sponge, I was able to create a much softer texture and spread the paint in thin splotches across the canvasses



Another example of experimentation was the facial expression on the figure in the leftmost panel. The first attempt looked too serene to represent the build up of anxiety and the pressure it creates.



Development as an Artist



Development of Skills and Techniques

Printmaking has grown to be my favorite medium. I've learned to appreciate the negative space of a piece just as much as the positive space, as more is not always better. Additionally, I've learned that while I don't dislike painting, I'm often impatient when waiting for layers to dry. When I would try to add another section before the paint was dry, it would blend and create a muddle of colors instead of a sharp, well-defined contrast. As a result, I've become more patient and willing to let things settle before working on them more.



Personal Development

Throughout the program I've become more confident in applying the elements of art and principles of design to subjects outside of class. I've become more analytical of the media I consume and have been able to confidently express myself in my works. Before the program, I didn't have a strong sense of what was important to me beyond surface-level interests. As a result of the research I've conducted while creating my works, I've found not just an enthusiasm for art, but also activism for LGBT+ youths that need support in a culture that makes them feel unwelcome.

