Mirrored Image ○ Exhibition Piece
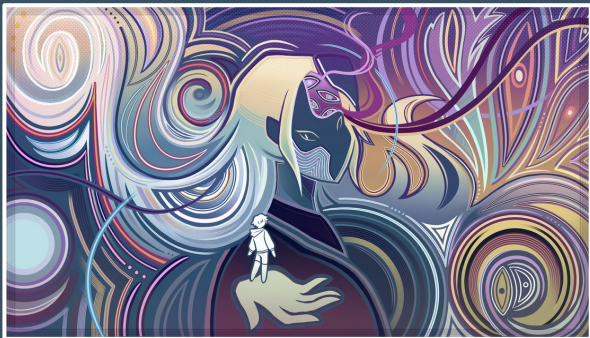
Silly Chaotic is a freelance illustrator in France who specializes in digital artwork, taking to various different social medias to share their work online. I personally stumbled into their work through a post on Twitter, introducing me to their stunning art. Most notably recognized through their big, complex illustrations, Chaotic also uses their art to portray their own original characters and designs, while also having their fair share of fanart for varying medias. In regards to composition, in almost every complex illustration by Chaotic, they end up utilizing the entire canvas, making the background busy, while still retaining clear focus points within their artwork. This is often something that I struggle to utilize within my own artworks. In addition to this, there is often a pattern through Chaotic's work, where they introduce the interesting dynamic of some "abstract higher being" versus the common "fragile human."
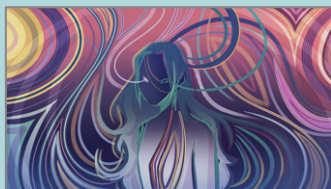

Introduction to the Process Portfolio

PLANNING SKETCH #1

PLANNING SKETCH #2

PLANNING SKETCH #3

EXPERIMENTATION + PLANNING OF WORK

In order to get comfortable with replicating the clean, precise line work and shapes that Chaotic has in their own work, I had decided to illustrate four different practice pieces. Within each piece, I tried utilizing different base background colors, such as a light blue, dark blue, purple, and orange yellow background. Not only was this practice for line work, these tests also served as a way to experiment with what set of colors worked together within the palette that I decided on.
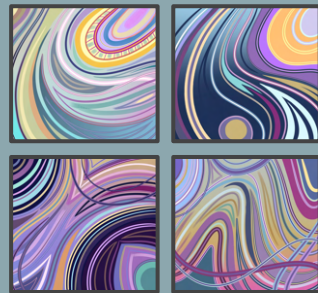
With Silly Chaotic being a major inspiration for my concept work and overall piece, I wanted my concepts and overall project to heavily focus on my continuing theme of identity, with a strong focus on the overwhelming connection between one's past self and present self. My main goal with these concepts was to connect the common two-person dynamic that's seen in Chaotic's work to instead represent physical representations and connection between one's past and current identity.

This illustration serves as an homage to those struggling with identity, and how the weight and memories of one's past self can often linger alongside us on our journey to self discovery. This piece was heavily based on Silly Chaotic's work, with an focus on recreating their beautifully intricate backgrounds and level of detail within their artworks.
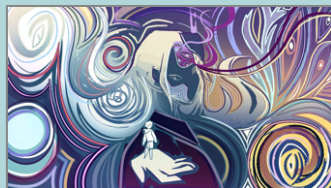
Out of all of my projects that I had done for this art program, this one was one of the most painful I had to go through. Not because of the work itself, but just with how difficult it was to physically get through. I had been dealing with physical shoulder pain that quickly deteriorated progress on completing this artwork. Each time I would attempt to work on this artwork, I would have to constantly take breaks between each hour on this piece. On top of that, having to create this piece that had a lot of intricate, detailed pieces present that were really time consuming made the process incredibly hard.

PLANNING SKETCH #1 PLANNING SKETCH #2 PLANNING SKETCH #3

#1 For my first concept, I wanted to make a piece that resembled the commonly pure white figures that often make up the focal point of Chaotic's pieces. I wanted to create an entity that looked most similar to one that Chaotic would make, with a focus on exemplified size and lack of realistic facial features. I wanted to try and replicate this fixation on the face and overall white figure, with having much of the swirling colors and lines protruding from the center piece, creating an array of color that emanates. I wanted to incorporate that focus between two entities, one with a higher power and one of a minuscule one.

#2 For my second piece, I wanted to greatly experiment instead with some deep warm tones and blue tones. Instead of the previous light yellows and oranges, I wanted to use this deep red pink against a navy blue. I wanted to utilize this main figure in the center of the piece, but with the absence of that secondary, smaller figure, in order to experiment with the composition and meaning of the work, and how that alters the overall artwork.
What I wanted to set this concept apart from my initial one above mainly came down to the difference in perspective of the main character, as well as the way the background merged with this focal point. In my previous concept, the background merged with my character by transitioning from the hair to strings of color, giving the impression that the hair on the character was what primarily made up the background. With this concept, I instead wanted to focus less on that flowing hair and color aspect, and more focus this abstraction to come more from the bodily elements of the main centerpiece, as if the body was smudged into colors.

#3 I wanted this concept to truly encapsulate the busy, yet controlled nature of the backgrounds of the complex illustration works completed by Chaotic, while still retaining elements of my own personal art style. My own personal art style influenced the color palette for all of my concept pieces to a heavy extent, as I often use shades of blues, purples, oranges, and yellows in my personal work. I wanted to incorporate busy spaces within the background, while still incorporating some less detailed areas that help keep some balance of space within the piece.

EVALUATION - CRITIQUE

My main goal for my artwork was to utilize many of the same aspects and techniques shown throughout Chaotic's work, and create a piece that best resembled their intricate illustrations, while also still retaining my own individuality, own art style, and overall interpretation. As a result, I personally believe both me and Chaotic's work share a lot of similarities and differences.

The biggest aspect I wanted to focus on for this piece, and where I believe we share a strong similarity, is how we both use space to our advantage. In Chaotic's work, I really aimed to replicate how all of the canvas was utilized within Chaotic's work, with each nook and cranny seemingly having something beautiful and detailed to look at. Our work shares this technique with one another, as our artwork is filled with abstract shapes and design in

the backgrounds. In addition to our similar technique when working with space, the compositions of our pieces are both similar. In both of our pieces, they feature this big, abstract humanoid figure, often alongside the presence of this smaller character, creating this unique dynamic within the work.

A lot of the differences between our work reside in our stylistic approach to this mix of abstract and humanoid illustration. In comparison, the complex and style of our works are different from one another, while Chaotic utilizes a more rendered style with thin line work, I instead utilize a simpler technique of shading reminiscent of my own art style, along with thicker line work.

PROCESS OF *MIRRORED IMAGE*

To start off with the completion of this abstract illustration project, I wanted to start with color corrections and edits before going into the process of finalizing this piece. Here, I display my initial concept I created and then the version I had made changes to. My main goal with these edits was to make the overall colors a bit more saturated, as I feel my initial concept lacked some colorful, popping elements that are present in Chaotic's work. The before and after is shown on the left.

BEFORE

AFTER

Beginning the cleanup and actual finalization of this concept, I would have to utilize a strange technique. I created two layers, one with my initial concept, and then a separate transparent layer in which I would make additions and changes and then merge together with the initial concept layer, repeating this process over and over for each impactful change made.

I started this process by focusing on the main character, going in and cleaning up facial features proceeded and the hair, making the lines cleaner. In addition to this cleanup to the face, I to add lines and pops of color within my edits, making the piece more complex as I went along.

I worked from the top down, making outlines of the face and adding defining line work and stylization throughout my process. I work on completing the cleanup and adding of details to the main figure in the center of the piece, prepping some areas surrounding it for cleanup. This process of creating new layers and merging them became very reminiscent of painting, overlaying my previous drawing and adding to the existing progress.

After focusing much on touching up on the face of my centerpiece, I work downwards and begin to clean up the torso and the hands present. I utilized blocking in these shapes of deep purple maroon, then applying a gradient of dark purple that traveled downward. Afterwards, I would create the line work that outlined these shapes. In addition to cleanup of the torso and hands, I also cleaned up the small, white figure that rests in the palm of the hand.

After finishing up the main body and center point of the piece, I traveled to the right in order to continue. I would begin some of the background elements here, blocking in big shapes of color, creating gradients that corresponded to the colors of my original concept image. I repeated the same process of blocking in shapes and then outlining with the proper colors for line work, making sure that I was as precise and as attentive to each line stroke.

It was at this point in the process that I would face some of the hardest and tedious parts of the drawing. By traveling to the right and top right to do cleanup, I would begin having to do these intricate, precise line work details and shapes. I work very carefully and patiently at this step in the process, making sure that my lines are as smooth as can be. Throughout this process, I am constantly checking my initial concept sketch on a different layer.
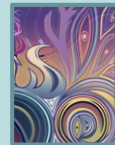
While I am working on cleanup on the right side of the canvas, I make sure that I keep this balance of overlaying line work. I outline each shape meticulously and along the way create additions to the piece by filling up dead space. Throughout my process of revamping the right side, I am adding new elements such as shapes and lines in order to contribute to a fuller looking composition, as it is my goal to replicate the busy backgrounds by Chaotic.

After completing the right side of the canvas and successfully cleaning it up, I move onto cleaning up the mid and left section of the piece. I used a variety of four different brushes for this whole piece, utilizing the regular pen brush, the airbrush, edge pen, and a textured flat brush. I used them all to create the look of precise line work I wanted, and were essential in creating the abundance of gradients of color in the piece.
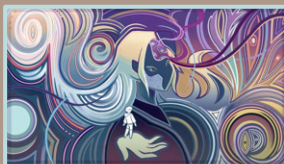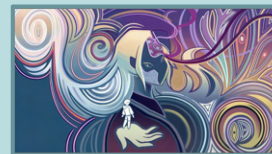
For the final part of this illustration, I focused on revamping the bottom left of the canvas. Again, following the same process that I had been using for this whole illustration, I first blocked out a large area of color, applying the necessary gradients of color, then outlining these shapes with precise line work. Throughout this process, I utilize all four different brush types, using all of them to achieve the desired effect that I wanted for the area.

Enmascarado ○ **Exhibition Piece**

I wanted this piece to be a relatable message to those who are children of immigrants, who never feel as if they truly belong to their true heritage. To those of us who feel we are stuck between this pull and tug between different cultures that we are forced to assimilate into, always feeling unsure if we feel we are being true to our real identity and doing it justice. The deep, real isolation and struggle of trying to find ourselves in two entirely different and colliding worlds.

ARTWORKS OF INSPIRATION
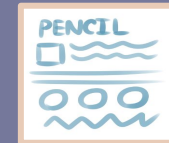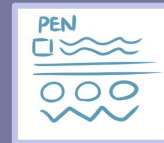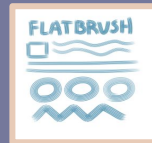
In a variety of different drawing programs, there are almost always options to select different brush types that you are able to utilize within your artwork. My drawing program, FireAlpaca, is no exception, and even allows you to import different brush textures into the program if you so wish. The type of brush you use for your digital pieces can actually have a big impact on the overall mood and feel of the piece, as some brushes offer different textures that can both change the mood of the piece and overall visual quality. For my digital piece, I wanted to experiment with the different types of effects I could get in my piece using these tools.

ARTIST ONE

Do Ho Suh is a Korean artist who focuses on both installation art and sculptural art. Through his works, he focuses on the ideas such as the significance of memory, the value of a home, and the struggle of being an immigrant. Through his work, he often reconstructs old places from his past, bringing them instead into new environments. Often taking into account physical space and the significance of physical objects versus metaphysical aspects, Do Ho Suh uses all of these things when creating his pieces of art. The ability to recreate these deeply personal connections and experiences and be able to set them down into an entirely different environment is something that Do Ho Suh values. Through his work, he is able to tap in and provide that connection to cultural displacement that so many immigrants, alongside decades of generations, have had to deal with and continue to deal with on a daily basis.

ARTIST TWO

I was inspired by the work of Thomas Brush, an indie game developer, and his old flash game Coma. I had ended up playing this game as a child, and it really resonated with me. I took a lot of inspiration from the main character, Peet, as well as the other small characters that you would encounter as the game progresses. All of the characters look almost identical to one another, all sharing a round figure with circular hands with distinct white eyes that stick out against their bodies. The art of Thomas Brush in his indie game influenced the sort of mood that I wanted to bring.

ARTIST THREE

Edel Rodriguez is a Cuban American artist, who immigrated to the United States as a teenager. Primarily known for his use of black inks and pastels, Rodriguez experiments with a variety of different materials and surfaces for his pieces. His work mostly consists of topics stretching from identity, cultural displacement, nostalgia, and immigration. Rodriguez is an artist who uses strong colors and textural elements in order to convey the message of each of his pieces, often taking an illustrative approach to many of his works.
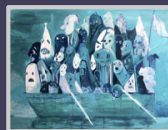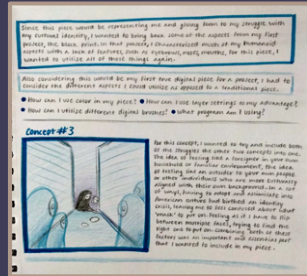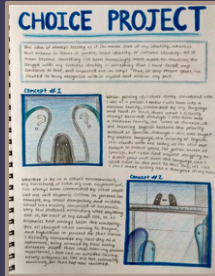
I wanted to focus on the ideas and impacts that surround assimilation, immigration, and cultural displacement. Growing up, I had been oblivious to the effects of being in America would have on me as a child of immigrants who came to the United States. I never knew that in order to be successful here in the US, that prioritizing English as one of two languages I would be learning, would have likely lifelong impacts on me. Although I was still surrounded by so many aspects of my own culture, such as through music, food, language, I couldn't ever shake the feeling that I even despite all of these factors that should be making me feel connected to my culture, I felt as if I was an outsider in my own home.

To start off my digital piece, I created a new file, selecting the dimensions I wanted. After that, I used the airbrush tool in order to create the basis of the background that I would be using for this piece, using a variety of different blues and purples at different opacities.
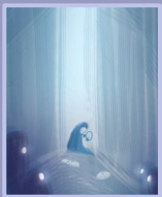
PROCESS OF ARTWORK - *ENMASCARADO*
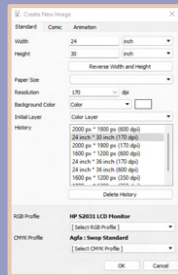
During the planning phase of this project, I was able to grasp some pretty good ideas for what I had in mind for this piece. I had never really been able to express this type of identity struggle that I had been experiencing in any sort of artistic way before, so coming up with ideas was both something that came naturally but was also a little difficult to put into shapes and lines. Digital art is something that I am very familiar with as I have been doing it for multiple years now, and I found that it would be the best fit for the theme I had envisioned. To start off my project, I would be using the program FireAlpaca, a program that I have grown comfortable with and been using for years. I would also be using my Huion drawing tablet in order to complete the digital drawing.

Next, I started construction on the overall composition that I wanted for this drawing. I wanted the main focal point of this drawing to be a representation of me, I put a hunched, blue figure in the middle, with the laying of the foundation for buildings on either side of the figure. In addition, I added onlookers into the front corners of the piece, deep shadows of purple with illuminating eyes, just like the characters in Coma.

Next, I begin on making some cleanups to the original sketch I had made. I focus first on polishing the buildings that are seen on both sides of the piece, slowly working on some of the inhabitants. In addition to that, I also begin on cleaning up the appearance of some of the purple onlookers, making their shadows and overall figures more prominent and strong. For this process, layering effects such as 'add' and 'multiply' were utilized the most.

I then fully complete the cleaning up process of my sketch, leaving my then more messy concept more solid. I end up defining a lot more of the crude shapes that I had set out for myself, making sure to add splashes of light purples in order to maintain a good enough balance of color throughout my piece, despite having a limited color palette being utilized. With this, I finally complete all of the inhabitants in the buildings as well.

After making some further adjustments such as adding glowing effects to the eyes of the purple onlookers and some more texture of the walls on either side of the main blue figure, I decide that I wanted to expand my canvas and make it taller. To do so, I copied my original drawing onto a new canvas, selected a tool to select an area of the top of the drawing, then transformed it to stretch all the way to the top to cover the entire canvas.

This is where I then begin to play around with the color values of my piece. In my drawing program, FireAlpaca, I use a tool called "Tone Curve," where I am able to set individual levels characterized by a point in graph to alter the colors of my piece. I do this, making a slight curvature to the otherwise straight line of my digital piece.
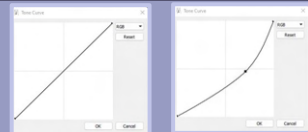

After that, I proceed to complete a sketch of all of the aspects that I wanted to include into the digital drawing. Following the previous color palette of blues and purples that I would be committing to for this piece, I make a rough sketch of buildings and electrical wires, with a different set of onlookers inhabiting the housings, looking onto the hunched figure through their pale windows without expression.

The difference that the tone curve can do to your pieces and their overall feel in sometimes pretty drastic ways. This can be shown on the right, where I display my final piece before and after the use of Tone Curve, where the piece before is visually a lot more bright, where after the tone curve, all of the colors seem to get more muted, more depressing. This mood change for my piece was exactly what I had been looking for, and was something that I had taken inspiration from the creations of Thomas Brush and his use of melancholy color schemes in his indie game, Coma. I had also forgotten at a point in the process to re include the masks on the street, so I also made sure to re add them into the final product of my digital piece.

Bound Together ○ **Exhibition Piece**

POINTS OF INSPIRATION

I had mainly took inspiration from this particular artwork from Frederick Little Packer. I knew going into this project that I had wanted to incorporate my bird as a prominent aspect of this self portrait. I looked through a variety of different old artworks of humans with birds, not being able to find anything that stuck out to me. I knew straight away from looking at this individual piece from Packer that I had wanted to recreate it. I admired the simple yet effective style and composition that was utilized to make this piece.
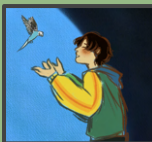
When replicating this piece, I wanted to make sure that I utilized much of the same colors, pose, and facial expressions. I wanted to find a way to incorporate all of these bright, vibrant colors from the original clothing of this woman onto myself and how I would personally dress. Keeping the same pose, but primarily focusing on the positions of the arms and hands was a main inspiration for me.

Keiko is my parakeet that I've had since 2019 and have been grateful was introduced into my life ever since. Keiko is a rescue, being found on the street and taken to the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission. He had been abandoned by a previous owner, with no one coming to claim him after he had been found. Keiko is an essential part of my life, and I wouldn't trade him for anything else. He is eccentric, loud, sassy, and overall has a ton of personality. Even on the days and mornings where I get woken up to his seemingly endless squawking and singing, he brings an immense amount of happiness and entertainment to me as a pet, but also as a companion.

PLANNING ○ CONCEPT DRAWINGS

I began the planning for my self-portrait process by creating a traditional sketch utilizing a mixture of markers and pencils, making sure to set the groundwork for the composition, pose, and setting out some of the colors that I would be using for the background. Being that this was my first concept, I used very loose, sketchy linework to outline my shapes and forms. Initially, I wanted to take as much inspiration as possible from the original artwork from Frederick Little Packer. In the original piece, there is a woman reaching out to a caged bird. So, my initial concept included me holding a slightly smaller replica of the cage for my bird. However, this aspect of the piece quickly began to change as I found that it made the piece limiting.

I then started to plan out the composition for my self portrait by sketching it out digitally. I wanted to mimic the original artwork by Frederick Packer by replicating the same sort of pose of the woman in the original piece. Rather than have me reaching out for my bird in his cage, I decided that it would be better if I instead changed this aspect and had him flying freely. I personally feel that I am able to bond a lot more closely when my bird is outside of his cage. Since I was changing certain aspects of the original piece, I wanted to make sure that I maintained what I could. For example, since me and the woman have different clothing, I implemented the same colors into mine.
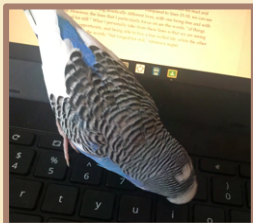

Although I really liked my previous digital sketch that utilized my personal style of messy lineart, I knew I had to revise it so that it could properly resemble the original artwork. Frederick Little Packer utilized thin line work in his pieces, as well as colored linework that shifted from one hue to the next. For example, in the original inspiration piece, he utilized a mixture of burnt oranges and dark blues in his linework, so I aimed to incorporate that into my own piece. I also had noticed that in the original piece, Frederick's style uses very little clothing folds, so I had to go and adjust my original drawing when I was refining it to reduce the amount of folds, overall making the sketch simpler.

My bird Keiko has become a significant part of my life, and I wanted this piece to serve as an homage to how he has become such a vital and valuable part of my life. Besides my general love for birds, I felt that any artwork that I would make of myself would feel incomplete without his presence. I aimed to capture that beautiful bond between an individual and their pet.

REFLECTION OF WORK

This particular project was by far one of the most intimidating projects for me personally, due to never having painted or much less created a piece that was as big as it was, a 3 foot by 3 foot painting. Not only am I still getting used to painting as a medium overall, this project would push me to complete the biggest piece I have ever done in my life. Overall, I am quite happy with the results, especially considering that I had been waiting for a project that would allow me to incorporate my bird in a way that made sense for the piece. I would say that this was definitely a piece I am proud of.

PROCESS AND EXPERIMENTATION OF EXHIBIT ARTWORK - *BOUND TOGETHER*

For my self-portrait project, I ended up having to utilize a variety of different colors that I usually never end up incorporating into my own work. The work of Frederick Little Packer often included vibrant greens, yellows, and oranges. This personally contrasted extremely with my own personal style, that for the most part utilizes a majority of desaturated, pastel colors with vibrant undertones. For this reason, I had to experiment with a multitude of colors and shades I was unfamiliar with. Whenever it comes to any sort of painting project, I find it personally easiest for me to apply all of my paint onto individual papers. I do this same method when it comes to mixing paints, as it makes it much more convenient. As opposed to a palette holder for all of my different colors, applying all of my paint onto a sheet of paper allows me to be able to test out different types of brushstrokes on the page before applying it to any sort of canvas or surface. It also provides a good basis for allowing me to get rid of any access paint, making sure that as I apply it to my surface that I am only utilizing the desired amount. Utilizing multiple papers also allows me to document the experimentation and mixing of a variety of different colors to reference later.
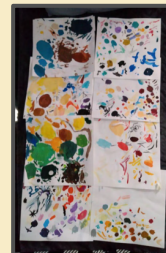

I start off my self portrait painting by constructing the canvas and stretching it, applying gesso to it to prep it for painting. Afterwards, I begin to set the foundation for what would be the background of my self portrait. The original piece heavily inspired from Frederick Douglas utilized this slightly dark blue, so I aimed to replicate that color. I used a mixture of green, navy blue, and white in order to achieve the desired color, using a big wide brush in order to cover the entire surface area.

After completing the background for the piece, I begin incorporating this draping color of dark blue onto the right side of the portrait. Doing this was an essential part of the piece as the original artwork utilizes these two simple colors clashing and working together in order to set up the composition of the piece. Trying to get the curvature of this dark blue was something that proved to be a little of a challenge, as I tried my best to use a small brush to create an outline, using a big thick brush to almost color it in after I had created this sort of stencil.

After I complete the background of my self portrait, I focus on the main focal point of the piece, myself! I carefully used my refined concept sketch as a main guide for figuring out the placements of my torso, arm, and head. I decided to use some cheap, lower quality paint in order to set the foundational shapes for my piece, planning to use my higher quality paints once I set out a good outline. I started from bottom to top, beginning with the placement for where the top of my legs would end up, using this foundation as a building block and use as a reference.

After I had set the foundations of all the parts of my body, I then began shaping my hair and the smaller details of my self portrait, such as my eyes, nostrils, mouth, and facial mark. I used my refined concept as a strong reference while at this point in the process, carefully examining it and making sure I incorporated much of the same shapes. I noticed that in a lot of Frederick Little Packer's work, he often strays away from using a direct black and instead utilizes incredibly dark shades of other colors, barely straying away from black. I took this into account, making sure that for my fine details I utilized a dark blue.
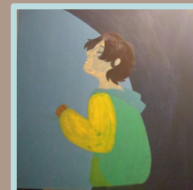
I proceeded to finish outlining all of the shapes of my piece by creating another prominent focus of my self-portrait, my hands. In the original piece, these hands reaching out were a prominent focus of the pose, and I wanted to make sure that I recreated them in my own piece. Afterwards, I had begun to work on some refinement to my piece, as well as incorporating some of the early colored linework. For example, I started solidifying much of my clothing in strong color, shading on the hood of my clothing, as well as patterning on the side of my hoodie.

After having everything outlined, I continued work on my self portrait by making all of my colors strong and no longer transparent in certain areas. I went in with cheap paint at the beginning to use for outlining certain shapes, so that I could use my more expensive, higher quality paints on the top layer. I made a handful of refinements at this point, such as touching up my hair, hoodie, sleeves, and the design pattern on the sleeve. It was crucial to get these colors as strong, vibrant, and overall close to the original artwork, which valued these aspects.
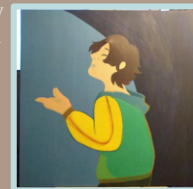
PROCESS CONT. AND EVALUATION: CRITIQUE ARTWORK - *BOUND TOGETHER*

I then began on the most unifying part of this process, completing the line work for this piece. Although I had placed small implementations of line work earlier, they were only there to remind myself of what colors I had wanted to use for the lineart. In the original piece by Frederick Little Packer, he utilizes a mixture of two different colors, blending and transitioning into each other as his line work for his piece. I ended up mixing up two different to use for my lines, a burnt orange, and a dark blue with the slightest hint of green. I carefully used a small brush, cleaning it in between each color used.

The original artwork I had referenced and took heavy inspiration from and my own individual piece share both a lot of similarities when it comes to certain aspects, they also share a handful of differences between one another that make each artwork unique and have their own spin.
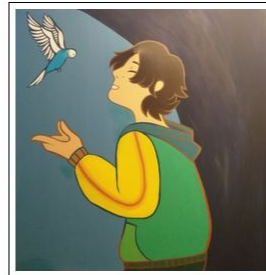
After I had completed all of the linework for my piece, the "me" aspect of the piece was finally finished. I had wanted to incorporate my bird into my self portrait, so after I had finished my part of the piece, it was time to start working on my bird in this piece, Keiko. Keiko is a parakeet, and who is also a rescue, found on the street and taken into the Milwaukee Animal Domestic Animal Control Commission, with no one who had come to pick him up. I used a brush with a prominent long tip, creating the outlines for both his wings and body in a bright white

WIth having the outline for his body and his wings done, it was time to add some of the colored patterning that he has on his small body. Keiko's most prominent feature was his blue chest and torso, so I utilized a mixture of white, blue, and a hint of green in order to achieve the desired color. I also began on highlighting some of the linework and adding the more intricate details, such as his beak, eyes, and cheek patterns. I outlined bits of his chest, head, back, tail, and even his feet.

To finish the painting off, I continued to work on the lineart for Keiko. In this entire piece, this had to be one of the most intricate parts that I had to really take my time when doing. Because of the size of the painting and the big easel that I was using, painting Keiko proved to be a struggle, as this part of the canvas was getting to the point where it was so difficult to reach, having to strain myself by standing on the tops of my feet. Despite this, I pushed on, using a thin brush and diluting my color for linework with a hint of water to make the lines go on smoother, utilizing confident arm strokes.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Both of our pieces share a lot of similarities when it comes to composition, background, posing, coloring, even down to the types of figures and the number of figures within the artworks. To start off, the backgrounds of the piece are both similar to one another, both incorporating this blue and dark blue that arches from the main figure. Then, both of our artworks share a main figure, the woman and myself, held in a similar position, with hands reaching out with heads tilted upwards. We also share much of the same color palette between both of our pieces, with both of our pieces utilizing blues, yellows, oranges, and shades of green. Then, both of our pieces feature two subjects, one human, and one bird, as well as use thin, colored line art.

Despite these similarities, there is no doubt differences between both me and Frederick Little Packer's work. For example, the human figures in the artworks have greatly differing clothing styles from one another. While the woman in Packer's work is more glamorous and wears more form-fitting open clothing, I instead am wearing a hoodie that barely exposes much skin. There is also room to mention that although the poses are similar, the woman in Packer's pose is a lot more tight, while mine is more loose. The differences between the birds is one of the most prominent differences, with while one bird is caged, the other is flying freely.

Percepción ○ **Exhibition Piece**

This art piece serves to represent the societal and internal judgement that a multitude of immigrant children face when struggling to connect to their roots, as well as the struggle with tethering the line between the familiar and unfamiliar towards one's upbringing. Overall, this piece serves as a representation of the internal and external turmoil that comes with finding the grasps to one's cultural identity.

ARTWORK INSPIRATIONAL ARTIST

To be my main reference and source of inspiration, I looked at the art piece Privacy vs. Surveillance by Edel. Although a very clean and precise illustrative art style is utilized in this piece, I found it to be a very impactful and overall meaningful, despite it being very different to the work I usually find appealing to myself. The usage of grayscale was something that really brought my attention to the piece, as for my own personal work I usually end up using a variety of different bright, vibrant colors to enhance my own work.

This piece by Rodriguez instead utilizes the exact opposite, using the absence of color to set the mood for the overall piece. In addition to the color scheme that the piece had used, I was also drawn to the way the composition was laid out, with the towering figures on the human staring, judging intently.

PLANNING SKETCH #1

For the first concept I had planned out for this project, I wanted to make sure that I kept the primary aspect of Edel Rodriguez' piece by retaining the abundance of eyes in my sketches. In addition to that, I wanted to keep the human subject in question in contact with the ground in order to stay similar to the original piece by Rodriguez. Keeping the same color palette and linework was something that was essential during the planning process as well, in addition to trying my best to mimic the original, simple, and illustrative style that the original piece, Privacy vs Surveillance, exerts.

PLANNING SKETCH #2

For my second concept, I wanted to retain the sense of this overhanging pressure from the original piece, but in a more original and unique way from the source material. I used this concept to experiment with a sketch that didn't rely on the usage of eyes as the pressuring and surrounding background of the piece. Instead, I utilized these round, abstract swirling shapes in order to mimic the abundance of space that the eyes in the original piece by Rodriguez utilizes to shape his own composition. Again, I wanted to make sure that I kept the human figure in this piece in contact with the ground to keep the depressing feeling of the original work. In addition, I utilized this concept in order to see how I could use the limited color palette of grays in a way that was more unique.

PLANNING SKETCH #3

For my final concept, I decided to go with a more direct approach to incorporating the aspects of the original piece. I wanted to use this sketch as a way to see what composition I could make that was both unique but also utilized many of the same exact aspects of Edel Rodriguez' work. As a result, I decided to abandon the idea that my human character for this piece would have to be in contact with the ground, and instead was set as the prime focus, standing up in the middle of the artwork. However, I wanted to keep the feeling of being overwhelmed by these immense eyes on the main figure, I positioned them in ways that made the background busy but still focused on the center character. I ultimately decided to go with this concept as the sketch that I would follow through with for my final piece.

One of the main challenges that I would have to face in this piece was asking myself the question, just how much simplicity is too simple? I would have to create a balance between complex and simple shapes in order to replicate Rodriguez' work. I had to come up with a few different sketches during my concept work, adding and deleting things that seemed too in order to properly resemble the original work by Edel Rodriguez to the best of my ability.

EXPERIMENTATION
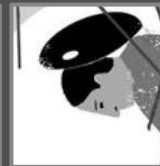
One of the main challenges that I would have to face in this piece was asking myself the question, just how much simplicity is too simple and how complex is too complex? I had to experiment with a few different sketches during my concept work, adding and deleting things that seemed too complex in order to properly resemble the original work by Edel Rodriguez. I mainly experimented a lot with trying to figure out how to draw my face in this artwork. The original work keeps the facial expressions on the human face relatively minimal, so I had to find a balance between replicating this simplistic human face, while also retaining some of my own personal facial features to truly resemble me. During my concepts, I went through three different iterations of myself, with all of my concepts attempting to recreate my head situated in different angles. Even though the core aspects of all of the details on my face are the same, the slight differences between all are apparent.

PROCESS OF ARTWORK - *PERCEPCIÓN*

To start off my illustration, I start by tweaking my original sketch. I needed to make some corrections before translating my sketch into a full, clean illustration. First, I transformed my original sketch and translated it into inches. I also wanted the physical vertical and horizontal aspects of my piece to be similar to the original piece by Edel Rodriguez, so I decided to vertically extend my canvas to better represent the original artwork I was basing my illustration off of. I do this by taking my sketch and selecting the lasso tool in my drawing program, selecting the top upper section of my sketch.

After selecting the upper part of my sketch, I then drag my selection upwards in order to fully cover the canvas. Although it does leave the upper part of my sketch looking abnormally stretched, I merely am using this as a reference for later. Rather than going through the trouble of redrawing the sketch to fit the dimensions, I found that doing this was a quicker, time efficient solution. After I stretch my selection upwards, I proceed to lower the opacity of the layer my sketch is located on in order to prepare it for line work. Doing this would allow me to properly reference all aspects of my sketch.


After lowering the opacity of my sketch, I proceeded to start on outlining some of the prominent shapes in my piece. The person in the middle of this piece is meant to be me, so I started off with shaping my dark hair. Trying to mimic the original piece by Edel Rodriguez, I wanted to try my best to make my lines and shapes as clean as possible, deviating from my usual personal art style that utilizes messy yet compact linework. Rather than completing linework on top of a sketch like I usually do, I blocked out shapes of color. I mainly focused on shaping each strand of hair, adding white accents here and there.

After blocking out the shapes for my face and hair, I then proceed on blocking out the shapes for my clothing. I chose a simple outfit of just a hoodie paired with a hoodie underneath, as having a complex outfit wouldn't be mimicking the style of Privacy vs. Surveillance. The artwork by Rodriguez utilizes this clean and simplistic illustrative style, so it was of utmost importance that I retain those aspects into my own piece. I make extra care during this step to pay attention to the colors that I use for my clothing, as the original reference I am using for inspiration utilizes a limited variety of monochromatic colors.

After completing my clothes, I continue to tweak certain aspects. In Privacy vs. Surveillance, the usage of white accents is prevalent, so I wanted to make sure that I incorporated them into the folds and spaces between my clothing. I had also completed the facial expressions on my face, trying my best to make it simplistic and minimal, yet still enough to convey a look of discomfort and discontent. I then start on the actual background of the piece! Since the original work by Edel utilizes these perfectly round eyeballs, I start off replicating this by creating this sort of outline that acts like a circular template that I can copy.
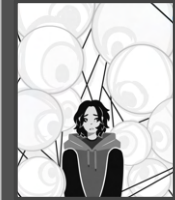
Using this circular template, I am essentially able to copy and paste this circular outline over and over again, making the process very time efficient. Each paste of this template resides on separate layers, allowing me to move and distort them as needed. After I finish pasting all of the outlines I want, I then get rid of any tangent lines, and then set all of the linework to a shade of grey to mimic the original piece. I then begin adding these black, solid thin lines across the piece, connecting and overlapping against many of the eyeballs in the background. These black binds were an essential part to the original reference.

After finishing all of the outlines and precise linework, I then move onto the coloring phase of the background. I heavily use the same coloring patterns for the eyeballs in the background of Privacy vs. Surveillance. Being that these eyeballs were the prime focus of Edel's original piece, I wanted to make sure that they got the same attention and have a clear resemblance in my own piece. At this point, I create all of the irises and pupils in all of the eyeballs, coloring them with grayscale colors. I make sure to clean up any small mistakes I see on the way, such as extra tangent lines and any overlapping lines present.

After completing all of the coloring of the background aspects, I then move onto the final phase of my digital illustration. To finish the piece off, I take another look around and make sure that I get rid of any small mistakes and lines that I may not have noticed. I also fiddle around with some of the colors of my clothing and altering them to be slightly lighter. I also make the black bands of straight lines recolored to a dark gray, matching the original reference artwork. Lastly, the original piece by Rodriguez has this almost grainy white overlay on top, so I tried my best using a digital brush to recreate the effect on the original piece on mine.
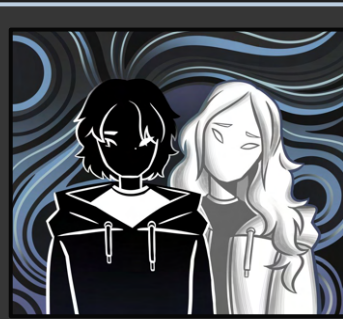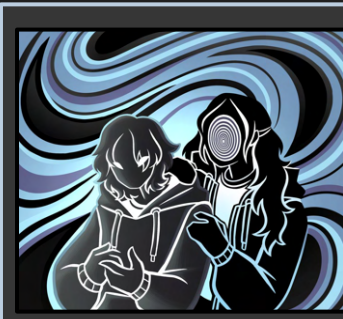
Body of the Beholder ○ Exhibition Piece

Ghost is a musician and artist who focuses on obscure subjects, utilizing abstract and disturbing imagery in order to enhance the meaning of a lot of their works. From Ghost's work, I mostly took inspiration from the shape language and the backgrounds that they often use in their artworks. I particularly gravitated towards the thick line art they used when make repetitive swirls, and knew I wanted to incorporate them into my own piece somehow. I also wanted to incorporate some of the body horror they have in their pieces into my own, by distorting and adding strange shapes to the human body. In addition to the horror elements on the human figure, I wanted to utilize the types of backgrounds that Ghost uses. They often utilize a limited color palette, with a main focus on one particular color. I wanted to mimic this by using colors of a very similar nature, while having a primary color that the eye focuses on. I also wanted to incorporate how some of the facial features on the human face were hidden or removed completely.

REFLECTION OF WORK - BODY OF THE BEHOLDER

The opportunity to create these artworks for this project is something I feel privileged to do. That being said, these artworks and the whole documentation of this project is something that is incredibly personal to me and is something that I am still living through and struggling with. To come out and openly say that I am a transgender boy in the process of transitioning is something that can't easily be said, and it is something even I am still in awe of trying to come to terms with. The opportunity to document these emotions at all is something that truly resonates with me. These artworks are an homage to some of my deepest feelings in regard to the internal struggle that I realize I have been struggling in silence with for years. The main thing I want to reflect on is how much each part of these artworks mean to me. All of them act as a mirror into previous and current mindsets I have been dealing with, and I hope to find a way to provide relatability to those who may see these artworks, no matter how different our situations may be. I wanted to keep the meaning of the artworks vague enough to be applicable to a plethora of other scenarios, but if reading the meaning of all of them is something that makes someone feel even more comfortable, I am truly content with that. Not only do I think these artworks were something that I will appreciate doing for my own well-being, again, I do hope they act as a way to remind someone that they are never alone.
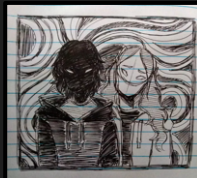
This art piece serves as a way to illustrate the process of self-discovery of one's authentic self. This illustration is also a way for me to share my experience and identity and overall experience to coming to terms that I am transgender. This artwork serves as a way to put my current self and past self on a platter, to put my internal feelings into an expressive way, and attempt to show the difficult experience that comes with finding a way to accept your past and your present for the sake of cultivating your future.

For this whole project, I wanted to focus on the mental toll and overall experience of dealing with gender dysphoria. I wanted to break down some of the struggles into three main ideas. For this concept, I wanted it to symbolize apprehension, and the earlier stages of realization. I wanted the piece to include both the current me as a dark vision, while the previous version of me stands behind, unsure of what is to come. I wanted this concept to symbolize the uncertainty of the future and what's to come, shrouding what would be my current appearance in a harsh void. I wanted this concept to be the fear of realization and the confusion when it comes to developing one's true identity within themselves.

For my next concept, I wanted to focus on the feelings internally that come with struggling to remember your past self. I wanted this part of the concept to symbolize the past part of you that feels always lingering or stuck, something you can never get rid of despite wanting to live a different life. I wanted this part to represent the feeling that a different person feels like they're stuck with you, and in this case, the different person being a previous version of myself. I wanted this piece to be a representation of the inner turmoil these feelings can cause, especially during the early, vulnerable stages that come with transitioning into one's authentic self.
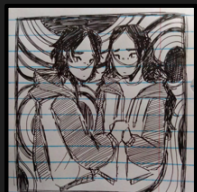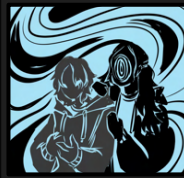
Finally, for the final concept I had come up with, I wanted to find a way to symbolize the introduction to acceptance. I wanted to find a way to make a concept that both showed acceptance, but with hesitation. I wanted to create two figures, one with my current self, and one with my past, holding hands with both of them having concerned and overall uncertainty in their eyes. I wanted this piece to be about slowly beginning to accept one's past self as an experience in one's life, despite how looking back may hurt. For this reason, I wanted to show more focus on the current me by putting myself in the forefront, while still allowing my past self some attention. I truly felt that this was one of the most impactful and essential parts of my concepts for this art piece.

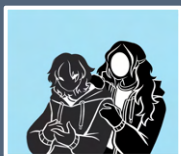# PROCESS OF EXHIBIT ARTWORK - *BODY OF THE BEHOLDER - ARTWORKS 1 & 2*

To start off this illustration, I took one of my initial concept sketches and lowered the opacity of it. I then used the sketch as a guideline, taking a shade of grey and black. I used these colors and began to make outlines of the subjects in my piece, making sure not to leave out any of the defining shapes that poked out, such as hair strands. Blocking out the shapes of my figures I found was the best way to start off the project, as it allowed for me to easily color in my subjects, while still giving space for detail.
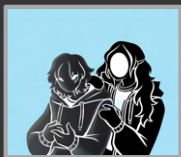
After blocking out all of the necessary shapes for the two subjects in focus, it was time to move onto some of the most important aspects of this piece. For this step in the project, I needed to complete all of the linework necessary for creating the details within the piece. I needed to make these outlines for hair, eyes, clothing, folds, hands, and arms. In a lot of ways, I was attempting this half lineless and half lined style by not outlining all aspects of the figures in the artwork.

After creating all of the linework and details within my subjects, I proceeded to work on the shading and lighting of the piece. I knew that I had wanted to create a particular focus on the left character, while still having the character on the right have focus as well. To achieve both of these things, I decided to keep the character on the right with a solid black color, while proceeding to give shading and lighting affects to the character on the left. This way, each character could be interpreted as the centerpiece, as both of them were gravitating aspects.

After finishing all of the textured shading and lighting for the left character, I then proceeded to move onto working onto the background of the piece. I wanted there to be a main color for this piece, (that color being blue), while still having a diverse, interesting background. For this process, I would heavily rely and utilize on the airbrush tool. I took a shade of purple and created an upside down 'U' shape, taking it across the perimeter of the drawing. I then lowered the opacity, making a purple-blue outline. I then took a bright, light blue and then applied it in the middle.

After finishing the coloring effects for the background, I proceeded to further work on the background by starting on all of the solid line work that would be necessary. I used my initial concept sketch as a template, taking a strong dark black for my linework. Taking a lot of inspiration from Ghost, I wanted to make sure that these lines that I was creating in the background of my piece were long, flowy, and clean. I needed to be extra precise for this part of the process, paying attention to the different line widths and lengths for each stroke.

After I had completed all of the solid black linework for the background, I continued adding to it. I wanted to create a variety in color while still keeping a limited palette for this piece, so I had then introduced this dark purple into the composition. I used these dark purple streaks to act as a way to highlight certain areas and provide variety with the background. I used this color mainly as an accent to go along with the solid black line art, also using it for detail work on the right character's face. I also created a gray gradient clipping onto the original black linework.
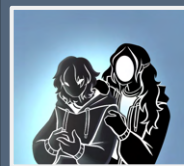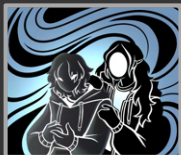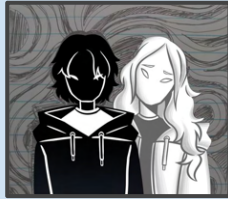
To finish off the illustration, I proceeded with the final touches that I would be adding to the background of the piece. I introduced another color to the composition, a light baby blue. Much like the purple I had been using previously, I used this light blue as a way to add accents of color around the piece. In addition to these finishing touches to the background, I made some small tweaks to the main focuses of the piece. I created a blue outline around the left character, while creating a blue gradient for the line art of the character on the right of the piece.

To start off with this second illustration, I take one of my previous concepts I had created. I then resize the original concept photo to the appropriate size, and then proceed to lower the opacity of the original image. By doing this, I'm able to use most of the original lines and shapes that I had created initially on paper. I wanted to aim for the best technique in order to retain the most of my initial idea, which was made easily by the steps I took.

The next step I take is some of the most important steps to this illustration, and to the overall style of this illustration. I begin with applying a dark shade of gray as a base for the background in order to create contrast to the main figures that I begin to block out. I first make a thin outline, following the shape and lines of my initial sketch with a solid black. After I complete the linework, I then begin to fill the entire figure with the same black.

After I finish creating and blocking out the second figure previously, I then begin on outlining the 2nd figure of this piece. This piece I instead wanted to outline and fill in with a bright, contrasting white to make the piece visually interesting. I also did this in order to stay within the color palette that I would have for all three of these illustrations for this project. I focus on these contrasting colors to shift focus between the illustrations.

After I finish off blocking out all of the two figures and center pieces of this artwork, I then begin on some of the more detailed aspects of the art piece. I begin working on the white and dark gray line work within the piece. In order to create contrast and some distinction between the foreground and the background, I wanted the linework within the center figures of this piece to utilize more thin linework in contrast to thick ones.

CONTINUED PROCESS OF EXHIBIT ARTWORK #2 + PROCESS FOR ARTWORK #3

Next, I begin to work on the shading detail for this illustration. In the previous illustration, I had created a gray figure who was detailed in shading, while the black figure remained in solid color. I wanted to create this same concept within this piece, but instead using it to shift between subject pieces. I utilized a textured flat brush in order to create the shading, utilizing a grey in order to shadow the bright white figure.

In addition to previously completing the figure in the white, I also apply a blue gradient affect from the bottom of the figure in the dark black. After doing that, I then shift focus onto the background of the piece as the main figures are then completed. At this point, I don't have much of an idea of the colors I want to utilize, so instead I use a mixture of white, black, and greys in order to set a template for all the shapes that I create.

To finalize this piece, I focus almost exclusively on adding the final details in the background. I wanted to utilize the same sort of color palette within all three of the drawings for this piece, so I utilized much of the same blues, greys, and purples that I had previously established. I often utilized solid lines, while also incorporating colors using the airbrush tool in order to create smooth gradients in the background and linework.

To start off with the final artwork in this piece of three, I began first by resizing the original concept work that I had created, just like how I had with the previous illustration completed. I resized it to the appropriate size, and then again lowered the opacity of the image in order to create a proper template to work off of. I then proceeded to use a dark gray in order to create an outline around the figure on the left side.

After creating the outline for the figure on the left artwork, I then proceeded to create the same outline I had previously on the right side for the other figure in the art work. After I finish creating the outlines, I then proceed to fill in both of the figures with the same shade of grey. I wanted this to be symbolic, as both of the previous two illustrations, I wanted to create a strong contrast between the figures, but instead I wanted them to be the same shade here.
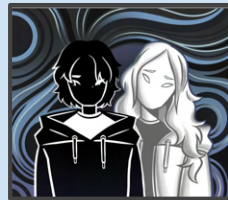
After filling out the figures with the solid dark gray, I then continued with the detail work within the two figures. I wanted this illustration to be some of the most detailed within the two center pieces, contrasting the two previous drawings that had little to no defining facial detail to this drawing with visible eyebrows, eyes, and mouths. I also wanted to create more color diversity by making the figures utilize gray and black, instead of being one solid color.
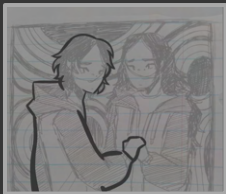
After I create all the linework and shapes within the center pieces of this artwork, I then proceed to work on the shading for this piece. To contrast between the previous two illustrations, I had made the decision to have them both utilize the same colors, which also applied to the way I shaded with the same color. I then proceeded to work on setting some of the base colors of the background, airbrushing shades of purple and blue.

After completing the center figures and setting the base work colors for the background of the work, I move onto creating the linework and shapes within it. I wanted the shapes in this piece to utilize the crescent shapes seen within the first illustration, and then utilizing the circular shapes within the second illustration into this last artwork. Once again, I continue to utilize the same color palette for the background here.

To finish off the final part of this three parter for this project, I proceed on some final details to finalize the art piece. I incorporate more detail within the linework, outlining them, and creating additions within the existing shapes. I utilize the airbrush tool once more to create more contrast and to make dark gradients of gray within the background. After that, I begin creating outlines of the center figures to finish the piece off.

Gallery Visits + Workshops

I was given the opportunity to be able to travel to Stevens Point, a University in Wisconsin where I would travel to the campus and experience several different drawing classes in which allowed me to gain insight into a college classroom. There, I got to take a tour around the university and look at some of the spaces in which student's worked. I traveled with the rest of my classmates, with all of us being separated into different groups and switched into different rooms for artistic activities that we would swap in between. One of the first activities that we participated in was traditional figure drawing. As an artist who has worked with both traditional and digital art as my preferred mediums for my whole life, figure drawing was something that was both familiar and distant from me. In both my digital drawings and traditional pencil drawings, I utilize a more cartoonish, stylized version of the human form. Through this class, I would have to go back to the fundamentals of drawing and learn the thumb and pencil technique for drawing proportions.

I was able to visit MIAD, an art college in Wisconsin. This school has been one of my dream schools since I was in middle school, especially since this school is not far away from where I live. I was eternally grateful that I got the opportunity to take a tour here alongside all of my other classmates.

Walking through the building, I immediately loved the school. The hallways were all filled with these beautiful, creative artworks that adorned the walls. Everywhere you looked, there existed tons of artworks. I got to see a bunch of the things student's were working on, as we were able to go for a senior exhibition class. There were so many inspiring projects strewn about, such as animations, paintings, sculptures, and even video games that people had created. The overall atmosphere and feeling that I got from this place was one that was simply amazing.

After my figure drawing class, me and my classmates were then switched into a completely different room, filled with hanging tapestries and ambient lighting. In the room we were greeted with large easels scattered around the room, alongside some drawing materials and plenty of paper. We were now instructed to pick an easel to stand at, in which each section of easels had a different, dedicated tapestry. We would then be given as set of different charcoal pencils in order to choose from. Charcoal is a medium that I was familiar with, but have rarely experimented with. When I draw, I usually work with smaller canvases and overall small dimensions. This exercise allowed me to challenge this aspect about my art-making process.

I ended up picking an angle that had me facing towards this patterned fabric against the wall. While there were other tapestries, I picked this one as this was one of the only fabrics that had a lot of pattern and variation, and I wanted to be able to challenge myself. I am an artist who predominantly only draws humanoid figures, often not focusing on drawing objects. On top of that, I often steer away from using realistic styles and replicating realistic textures.

Recreating these tapestries in a charcoal medium pushed me to create difficult textures, folds, and replicate complex lighting, something that would be otherwise difficult for me to practice in my usual drawing style and techniques. Although intimidated by this drawing exercise, I quickly picked up on the medium and techniques through my prior knowledge of drawing clothes on the human figure.


In addition to being able to tour MIAD and take a tour there around the campus to see all the wonderful works from the students attending, me and other students from my class were actually able to work on a project in collaboration with MIAD. Following some recent expansion plans for our school, MIAD and my school collaborated on an industrial design project, in which all of us would brainstorm and create our own ideas for an outdoor classroom. This was an especially new and challenging project for me as I had never done anything like this before. I had absolutely no experience in this type of work, being an artist that focused on almost exclusively character creation and design. We all got together as a class to brainstorm some different ideas and presented our own renditions of the perfect outdoor classroom. After our initial group brainstorm, we went and made our own poster boards, filled with illustrations of the items and the space we had created for an outdoor classroom, eventually presenting our ideas to the professors and students at MIAD directly on campus.

Sovereignty ◦ Exhibition Piece - Diptych

INSPIRATION
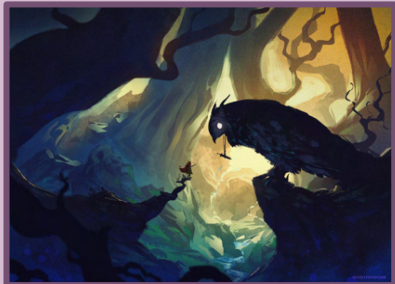
Linnea Kikuchi, more commonly known as "feefal" online, is a traditional and digital artist. I had been following Kikuchi's work for about two years now, and suffice to say, they're an artist who I truly take a lot of inspiration from. Their painterly textured art style, their unique designs, and their captivating concepts and composition for their artworks is something I have admired ever since I stumbled upon their work. Often focusing on drawings that aim to humanize otherwise nonhuman things, such as bacteria, fungi, and cosmic wonders, their artworks and style turn these things into creatively beautiful humanoid creatures. Most of all though, their color choices throughout all of their drawings is a staple of their style, and is something that I took great inspiration from.

Anato Finnstark is a professional freelance illustrator and concept artist. Most of their work is comprised of digital artwork that visits a variety of themes, mostly gravitating towards artworks that focus on the creation of fantastical elements with unique twists and beautiful color palettes. I had only just recently discovered Finnstark's art, but once I did, I was instantly addicted. Their art often is composed heavily on composition and impactful backgrounds, and I found that aspect of their artworks to be something that I really wanted to try and do myself.

CONCEPT #1

My idea for this concept sketch was to try and focus on the different perceptions of self-identity. We are all naturally complex, and I wanted to focus on the idea of how we can tend to push a multitude of all these deep feelings or qualities about ourselves, whether that may be physical aspects such as our body, or things such as parts of our personality that we may want to hide. I wanted this concept to sort of resemble all of those feelings truly coming out. I tried to incorporate almost geode-like elements to this piece, with the edges of the exposed parts of the body being lined with multiple layers to resemble the unique and multiple layers to a person. This geode element is then tied with the idea of self-identity as you can only truly see what lies inside by having the geode be broken.

CONCEPT #2

For this sketch I was mainly inspired by the idea of the different perceptions of awareness today in our society. I wanted to create a stark and obvious contrast between the two canvases by making an almost inverted affect with the characters and symbols utilized in the piece. I decided to create eye symbols, one for awareness, and one for obliviousness. For each symbol, I created the same character but with opposite reactions. While the symbol may be aware, the character is oblivious, and vice versa. I wanted this to symbolize how things are often seen in black and white in our society, whether it be on issues that are political, social, or anything of the sort. Too often I believe people are quick to group people into two sides, with little consideration that there may be room for gray areas.

CONCEPT #3

This sketch was actually my first concept that I had come up with, and is ultimately the idea that I decided to choose for my project. As I was drawing this concept, I was instantly gravitated towards it. At first when I began the sketch, I only had a vague idea of the meaning behind it. As time went on though, it was as if more bits and pieces that were hidden began to appear. Ultimately, I wanted to focus on this sort of contrast between those who assume a nurtured role, hiding under this guise of protection that we often take when we are young and still growing into the people we will come to be. On the other side, those who are aiding in that growth for the young or otherwise naive, holding out their hands to provide a place for those to flourish.

My art piece is a symbolic portrait of the different perceptions of independence, exploring the idea of having to take on the role and identity of a nurturer, while at the same time being the nurtured. Trying to navigate the world who convinces you all throughout growing up that self-reliability should be freeing, when in reality, it can be utterly debilitating.

REFLECTION

With this painting project, I found myself facing both challenges but also successes. At first, I was apprehensive about the project as the project forced me to get out of my usual comfort zone that I, for the most part, have stayed in for multiple years. Having to work with a medium I am both not incredibly confident in as well as having to create the painting using a much larger surface/size that I am used to. Despite all of the factors that led to me feeling uncomfortable about the painting, I still found a lot of ways to enjoy the process and I ultimately feel happy about what I was able to create, given my resources and experiences.

CONCEPT CONT. + EXPERIMENTATION + CRITIQUE OF WORK - *SOVEREIGNTY*

I wanted to further elaborate on my concept. I wanted to see what kind of background that I wanted to make for my piece and figure out its composition. Using the program IbisPaint X on my phone, I created a digitally edited version of my earlier concept so that I could visualize what kind of colors that I wanted to utilize. This allowed me to know what kind of flow I wanted to create for my piece. While I was making the background, I took into account some yin and yang elements and tried to incorporate that into my piece. Through this digital editing, I also realized that I wanted to create both a contrast between the two canvases by having them resemble day and night, while also having aspects of both intertwined with one another.
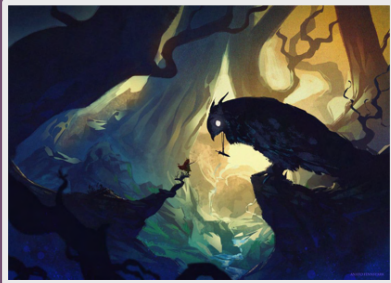
CRITIQUE OF ARTWORK

I personally believe that the works of Linnea Kikuchi, Anato Finnstark, and myself, all have their fair share of similarities and differences between one another. I believe that by looking at my personal artwork, Sovereignty, you are able to see the inspiration that I took from other artists.

In my painting, I tried to utilize colors from both inspirational artworks, the more pastel and light colored colors from Kikuchi's work, and the more warmer and deeper blues and oranges that are present within Finnstark's work. I also tried to utilize using the same sort of bird aspect that Finnstark's work has, specifically having a silhouette where only the eye of the bird can be seen by using a vibrant white. As well as including silhouettes from Finnstark's work, I tried to replicate Kikuchi's work by adding more realistic hands. In Kikuchi's work, the character in question has a unique skin color of a light blue. In my own work, I decided to make the hands of my piece have it's own unique skin color by using a light purple.

Although our pieces may share their similarities, that doesn't go without saying that they don't share their own differences. For example, in Kikuchi's and Finnstark's work, they both have drawings of characters will full bodies. In my art piece, I only depict a set of hands rather than a full character. In addition to that, comparing my piece to the other two inspirational pieces of art, their drawings are a lot more rendered then my own. In my own piece, I utilize a lot more solid coloring that differs our art pieces from one another.

During the planning phase of my painting, I spent a bit of time trying to determine what type of background would be best for my painting of my perceptions of identity project. Because I was taking inspiration from Anato Finnstark, I knew I wanted to have a more impactful background that would make the overall composition of my drawing more dynamic and interesting.

I wanted to experiment with different color palettes and different backgrounds to make sure that I was confident in my final decision for my painting, as I knew that even though it was the background and not the foreground, that it would add to the symbolic meaning of the painting. I went through a variety of different possibilities for the type of color palette that I wanted to use for my painting. I wanted to make sure I was both picking a palette that showed the inspiration that I took from Kikuchi and Finnstark, while also being a color palette that was able to show contrast between the two canvases, while also having their fair share of cohesion between one another.

Within all of the color palette combinations that I was experimenting with, I had to keep in mind the ultimate goal of this project I had set, which was to really hone in on the contrast between the two canvases. It was essential to the artwork that this piece would convey contrast yet still have blending between the two canvases in order for the meaning of my artwork, to compare the dynamics of the nurtured versus the nurturer, to be conveyed.

EXPERIMENTATION

PROCESS OF ARTWORK *SOVEREIGNTY*

I had decided on making my perceptions of identity project using acrylic paint as they are the type of paint I am most familiar with and have easy access to. Before I began painting, I considered doing a full, singular 2 foot by 2 foot canvas. Ultimately, I decided instead to make my project with two 2 foot by 1 foot canvases and I thought that the idea of the canvases being separate from each other would add a more symbolic meaning to my art piece. After deciding on that, I proceeded to stretch my canvases and gesso them to prep them for painting.
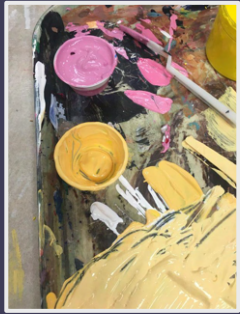
To start off my painting, I knew that I would have to start off by creating the gradients for both of my canvases that would resemble both night and day to contrast each other. To do this, I mixed paints to get the desired colors I had wanted, creating light pink, pale yellow, purple, and blue. For my first canvas, I would create a gradient of color using light pink and pale yellow to resemble the day part of my painting. With the other canvas, I did the same thing with the first by creating another gradient using purple and blue. I blended the two colors together using a large and wide brush to be able to cover the big surface of the canvases, as well as using a bit of water to help thin out and smoothen the blending process, making sure to use precise and slow strokes in order to achieve the desired gradient that I had wanted for each individual canvas.

After I had created the gradients that I had wanted for each canvas, I then proceeded to create my sketch on top of the canvases. To do this, I actually didn't use any method such as projecting or the grid method. Instead, I looked at my reference and decided to improvise. I was really apprehensive to do this at first, but I personally believed that this method would work best for me in terms of time management.

I outlined all of the vital points of the drawing that I knew I would have to include, such as the hands and the sprouting tree. After that, I began to outline some of the background that would be the pivotal point to building off the rest of the background and composition.

Next, I begin to start adding more elements of the background to my piece. For my painting, I wanted to make sure that it followed a sort of flow reminiscent of the shape of the yin and yang symbol to symbolize both the contrast and similarity of the different perceptions of independence. I wanted to create this flow by having all of these different and colorful precise lines coming together to follow this sort of curvature. While doing so, I incorporated many of the colors used on one canvas onto the other to create a sense of similarity between the two separate canvases, such as using warm with cool and cool with warm.

I further continued to work on the background of my painting. At this point, I realized that my decision to complete my sketch earlier was a little flawed as I didn't account for the fact that I would have to paint over my sketch in the future. Regardless, I continued with the background, adding more precise lines and adding more gradients within the piece. I oftentimes had trouble getting my colors to turn out opaque, having to layer my colors multiple times. It was at this point in the painting process that I finally felt as if my painting was coming together! Like earlier, I had continued to use contrasting colors on each of the canvases, such as the oranges and yellows used on top, and the purples and blues used on the bottom.

After I had finished the background, I then proceeded to work on the main elements of my drawing that I wanted to focus on. Due to earlier not having made my sketch before I had done my background, I had to improvise like I had done before. Looking at my reference image of the concept I had made previously, I took a medium size paint brush and began defining the branches of the tree that made up most of the composition of my piece. I then begun working on a small portion of the leaves that would be adorning the branches. After I had done that, I proceeded to block in the color of the hands that the tree was growing out of in order to continue and flesh out later.

Next, I decided to work further on the tree aspect of my painting as it is a crucial part of my composition. After I had previously finished painting out all of the branches of the tree, I then proceeded to work on adding all of the leaves that I wanted to incorporate. In addition to all of the trees I decided that I also wanted them to be adorned with these circles, as I believed it made the tree have some more flair. With the tree being done, I then decided to work on finishing off the hands of my piece, creating my colors for shading. After completing the shading of the hands, I completed the bird that would sit on top of the tree that I had made. Finally, I finished the painting off by outlining the hands in a thick, dark purple outline.

Observación ○ **Exhibition Piece**

PLANNING OF WORK

For my first concept, I focused more on filling the composition with a very distinct shape and dividing many pieces of the composition into clear, almost puzzle-like pieces. I wanted to make sure that I had

included the abstract, strange shapes that were present within Pocaarii's work, utilizing differing patterns and line work in order to create an abstract background. I wanted this concept to have the background more focused on dividing and addition, as opposed to my other concepts in which the background is built shaped around the main figure.

For my second concept, I wanted to focus a lot more on geometric aspects and shapes. Pocaarii incorporates a lot of abstract shapes and figures within their work, which was a very prominent part of their art style that was essential to practice. I wanted this concept to feature a very heavy mix of abstract shape alongside organic shape. I also decided to shift the composition for this piece from the last one, instead having the humanoid figures be in the center of the piece and have the background revolve around it instead of focusing on a corner of the art work.

For my final concept, I wanted it to be a good mix of my first two concepts, with abstract shapes and organic shapes alongside organic figures. Within Pocaarii's art, alongside the abstract shapes, also incorporates a lot of patterns within the backgrounds of their work. This concept would

become my choice for my final piece, so I aimed to make this a culmination of all of the aspects within Pocaarii's work. One of the organic shapes that I wanted to appear most in this concept was the idea of eyes, so I incorporated it into many parts and sections of my illustration to convey this theme.

This illustration is meant as a way to symbolize the outward and hidden judgement that is held in regards to minorities within our society, whether it be based on racial stereotypes or based on being a queer individual. I was inspired by queer Mexican artist Pocaarii, who utilizes busy and intricate abstract shapes mixed with organic ones within their illustrations.

REFLECTION OF ARTWORK

This illustration was difficult for me at times, and it ended up being a relatively frustrating project to work on. For starters, I mostly draw traditionally, often never utilizing a big space of area to draw on, always keeping my traditional work small. The size of this illustration was something that was really daunting, as my expertise was often working with smaller drawings and having to create these intricate, precise line work and detail on a surface area that was very uncomfortable for me. Overall, the project had started off pretty roughly and had led me to a lot of frustration during the start of it, which did impact my tone on the artwork. Overcoming the fear of working on a drawing this big for an illustration piece took a lot of hesitation from myself, but I do find that it was a very valuable thing to do in the end. Despite all of the troubles and tedious aspects that came with this illustration project, I am happy that I was able to create a final product.

INSPIRATION FOR ARTWORK

I was heavily inspired by Pocaarii's work due to their usage of line work. Pocarrii often utilizes varying line work in their pieces, most prominently in their backgrounds. In order to drive attention from one aspect to the other, they utilize switching between different lengths of thickness, which becomes essential when creating the busy, abstract backgrounds that they illustrate. Alongside the diverse line thickness, I was also inspired by how Pocaarii incorporated both abstract shape and real life objects into the backgrounds of their simple yet intricate illustrations.

With Pocaarii also being a queer Mexican artist, I felt that these aspects had also propelled the inspiration that I took from them and their work. Throughout a large majority of my works created for the art program have revolved around cultural identity and gender identity, with a particular focus on my personal ties to being Mexican and also exploring my own queer gender identity. I felt that this connection and relatability made influence on my work much easier.


EXPERIMENTATION

Within Pocaarii's work, some of the most prominent features that can be observed over and over again is the mix between organic shapes and abstract shapes within the artwork. This mixture becomes an essential staple to the busy backgrounds of their pen illustrations. Due to this, I wanted to make sure that I had tested out some of the same techniques throughout four different thumbnails. I wanted to do this so that I could get a good feel and grasp for the type of work that I would have to end up doing in the final piece, utilizing the same material of the illustration board in order to do so. In addition to using a variety of shapes and figures to fill in the negative space in Pocaarii's works, they also utilized a lot of patterns and repetition of the same shapes and figures. Most often, Pocaarii would utilize stripes, polka dots, and checkered patterns within their illustrations.

# PROCESS OF ARTWORK *OBSERVACIÓN*

To start off the project, I began with focusing on creating the humanoid aspect for this piece. I decided that by doing this, it would set the groundwork for the rest of the piece. This humanoid figure would essentially act as a way to reference the rest of the background, using the humanoid figure as a guide as to how big and small certain aspects would be and where they would fit onto the illustration. To create this figure, I would simply utilize a standard mechanical pencil, creating my sketch and thickening my lineart where necessary. Afterwards, I utilized a line hatching in order to provide color.

After I had finished with the first humanoid figure, I moved onto making the second one, as well as starting on the floor of the artwork. Within Pocaarii's work, there never seems to be a composition with a lone humanoid figure, so it was essential that this second humanoid figure was within the piece. I utilized a long ruler in order to create and map out the floor and all of the checkered tiles that these human figures would be standing on. After setting that up, I colored the tiles in with pencil, also using line hatching. Afterwards, I took my mechanical pencil in order to create the outline for the blank humanoid figure that would sit on the left.
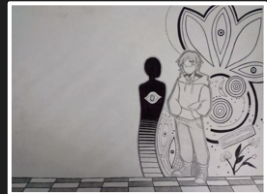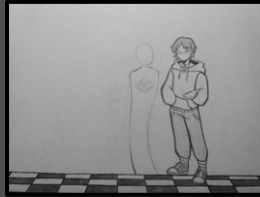

After I had sketched out the blank humanoid figure, I used a black brush marker in order to fill half of the body in. Afterwards, I then took a small gel pen and started creating this stair-like pattern that descended downwards towards the floor of the artwork. I also continued the theme of eyes within the center of the dark figure, making an eye within the chest. After this was done, I then proceeded to start on the abstract background, first using my concept as a reference and sketching out the placements of each shape and line. I then used a mixture of gel pen and brush marker in order to create the line work on top of the sketch.

After creating the outline for the right part of the background, I then began on finalizing them. This included using my ruler to create straight lines to create this stripped affect, where I then again used line hatching to color within the lines using my pencil. In addition to this, I finished up coloring in some pieces and adding some finishing dots and polka dots that were scattered within the negative space. After that, I began working on creating the sketch for the mid and left section of the piece, creating the geometric shape and organic shapes of clouds and the tree that would be within the piece.
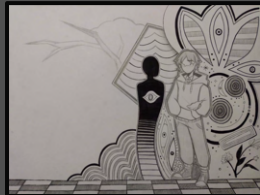

After creating the outline of the tree and finishing up the right section of the background, I proceeded on finalizing up the details on the clouds and tree. I colored in the tree with pencil, then outlining with gel pen. Afterwards, I shaded the tree to give it dimension before proceeding with adding the black leaves to the tree, utilizing my gen pen once more. I created thin, precise line work in order to finish up the look of the clouds that sat behind the piece. Once this was done, it was time to incorporate some checkered pattern within the illustration, a pattern that Pocaarii had utilized multiple times in their work.
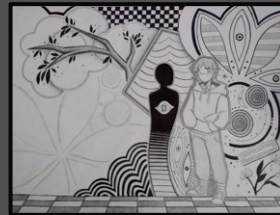

After I had finished most of the mid and left section of the piece, I then proceeded on the biggest aspect of this piece. I used my mechanical pencil to create an outline of six different eyes in the formation of a flower in the bottom left of this illustration. This is one of the most important sections of this artwork, so I wanted to make sure that it got a lot of attention. In addition to sketching this flower-like shape out, I had also sketched out the surrounding abstract shapes that were on the right side, which would end up filling up the empty space between the dark humanoid figure and the formation of eyes.

After I had set up the placements for the six eyes, I used my black brush marker in order to go over my sketch, creating clean, dark lines. I then did this again within the eyes, creating a contrasting line that varied greatly in thickness in order to create line variation, a technique that was often utilized within Pocaarii's own artwork. After creating this affect in all of the different eyes, I knew that I had wanted each eye to have a different design and pattern within it. This would create a sense of individuality, while also being consistent and cohesive with all of the other eyes that are in this flower formation.
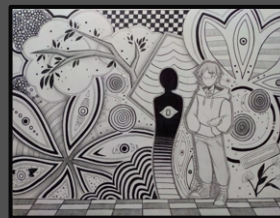
After creating all of the eyes, it was time to create the final aspects and apply the finishing touches to this illustration. In the top right, I had filled the composition with an assortment of small spheres with dots in the middle, continuing the eye theme that has become present throughout the artwork. After I had completed this, It was then time to focus on the finishing touches. I decided to create this 3-dimensional, almost sticker like effect by applying shading in areas such as around one of the main humanoid figures, around the tree, the clouds, and finally in between each separate eye in the piece.

Dispelled ○ **Exhibition Piece**
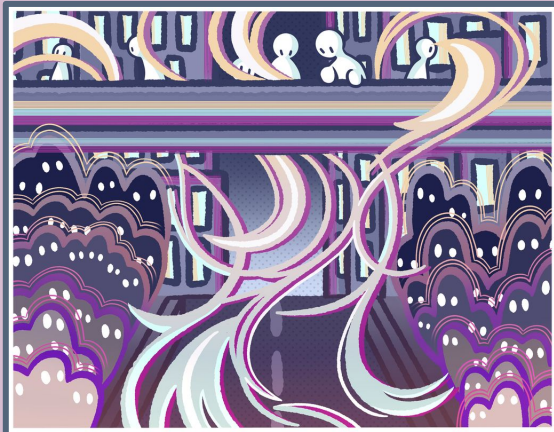
This piece is an illustration that highlights how the voices of minorities and the strength of their voices have often been overlooked by the ignorant during the past and to this day. This digital illustration represents the struggle yet rapid strength of said voices.

The execution for this piece came extremely natural to me as it favored a lot of aspects that I utilized within my own personal style and personal artworks. This made this piece so much more fun to work on, and I was really grateful for that. This project felt less like an artwork that I had to complete in order to complete for a deadline and instead felt a lot more natural and felt as if I was completing a personal drawing for myself. Im happy with what I was able to create for this project and I feel like it was a very fun thing to do to reference some of my previous work that I had created during my junior year of art. I felt like it truly showed how my style can develop but still retain such differing moods and tones through the composition and color choices that I had made in the past versus in the present.

INSPIRATION FOR ARTWORK

Do Ho Suh is an artist that I have previously inspired work off of, and I am actually utilizing one of his same artworks as an inspiration of mine again. His art installation "Bridging Home" has always been an artwork of his that has truly stuck with me, as it has been my introduction to installation art as a whole. I really admired how Do Ho Suh was able to place a piece of his culture in the middle of this big city surrounding by towering buildings and busy roads, and I knew that I had wanted to, yet again, create a piece that centered around this prominent bridge and street underneath. For my junior year choice project I had created a piece heavily inspired by this artwork by Do Ho Suh, and my goal was to recreate a 2nd piece that would be relating to both of these artworks. In addition to "Bridging Home," I became heavily inspired by Do Ho Suh's other art installations. Most prominently, I was very inspired by the color choices that Do Ho Suh had chosen for these abstract art installations. The use of brightly colored neon and pastel colors was something that I truly loved the look of, and it kept my eye hooked.

Finally, I was inspired and determined to reference one of my older works from my junior year of this art program. My choice project "Enmascarado" was something that I had really enjoyed doing, and I was motivated to create a piece that heavily referenced it while also still having a piece with its own individuality and unique flair to it. In planning, I wanted to create a good amount of contrast between these two pieces. "Enmascarado" focuses on utilizing about 2 main colors for the entire piece, so I wanted to make sure that this new one would include more variety of color in order to create this contrast I had wanted. In addition to that, I was inspired to make this piece to have contrast between the moods through composition and color.

PLANNING OF ARTWORK

For my first concept, I wanted to focus on utilizing a lot of yellow and warm tones. I picked a yellow background for this concept and applied a pink/purple gradient coming towards the bottom. I did this as many of Do Ho Suh's work include these bright purples and yellows within his glass installation pieces. I wanted to make sure that I had tried out different compositions of a city setting with a bridge in the middle of the piece, so I had created an angle in which we the viewer are looking at the bridge from the right hand side instead of dead center of the art.

For my second concept, I tried to do many of the same things from my initial one. I wanted to make sure that I was trying to incorporate multiple different colors and vary their shades and values in order to represent the colors from Do Ho Suh's glass installation works. This time though, I decided that I would utilize a more dead center composition for this piece as a way to more directly resemble many of the photos in which "Bridging Home" is taken in. "Bridging Home" is often photographed from the front view of the artwork, with the busy street down below and the surrounding buildings on each side of the bridge.

For my final concept, I wanted to try out a very odd angle in which we would be on the left-hand side of the subject and up close, with the windows of a nearby building taking up a good chunk of the left side. I really wanted to utilize these concepts as a way to see how I could really have the main subject of the piece still be in the center, but in differing ways that felt unique and different from one another. I also wanted to make sure that I was using a very similar color palette with all of these concepts, while still having a different feel and main color to them in order to make sure that they could all be differentiated, but still have that sort of clear connection to one another.

PROCESS AND EXPERIMENTATION OF EXHIBITION ARTWORK - *DISPELLED*

EXPERIMENTATION WITH COLOR AND SHAPE FOR EXHIBIT ARTWORK DISPELLED

Some, if not the most important part of Do Ho Suh's glass art installations is the variations of bright color that the glass is stained with, creating a beautiful display for the viewer. In addition to this, some of the most prominent colors utilized within my own work "Enmascarado" utilized this variety of shades of light and dark blues alongside these deep purples and accenting pinks throughout the piece. "Enmascarado" utilizes figures that are reminiscent of ghosts, lacking facial features, left with only bright, glowing white eyes. The city setting of Do Ho Suh "Bridging Home" & my work "Enmascarado" was also an incredibly vital aspect that I had wanted to replicate. Overall, the most important parts that I would be taking from my inspiration would be how color was utilized within the artworks, the style in which these human-like figures were depicted as, and the overall setting in which the artwork is placed in.

To start off this project, I took a brand new canvas and had covered the entire background with a dark, blue purple. After doing this, I had then taken an airbrush tool, selecting a very pale lavender purple in order to create a gradient. I made a gradient upwards, building up color in order to create a background that had a light lavender that trailed up into the original dark blue purple that I had set as the background for the canvas. Afterwards, I took the rectangle tool within my drawing program and filled a section with the same purple.

After setting the groundwork for the background up, it was time to work on the background line work for my piece. Because I was focusing on recreating a city background in order to reference Do Ho Suh's work in "Bridging Home," it was an essential part of the background that I would have to complete. To do so, I had used my concept sketch and set it on top of my layers at a low opacity to utilize as a guide for my line work. I used this in order to go over my previous lines, making them much cleaner and a lot more precise. I used a dark purple in order to create my line work.

After setting up the buildings and the line work for the bridge in the background of the piece in my previous step, It was time to move onto the coloring and addition of some of the most important subjects in my piece. I had colored the background with this slightly dark yet pale lavender, creating some simple shading in the buildings in order to create depth. After that, I had moved onto creating all of the ghost people that would represent the minorities for my theme for this piece. I utilized a variety of dark lavenders to light purple, making this makeshift gradient of color trailing down.

After completing the coloring and creating the colors of some of the subjects for my piece, I then moved onto some cleanup, more coloring, and more additions of subjects. Within the background I colored in all of the windows of these tall surrounding buildings with a light blue. I added additional shading the bridge and fixed some lighting near the curbs on the street in which both sides would be holding all of these ghost-like people. Finally, I then added some important subjects to the top of the piece. These subjects would sit on top of this centered bridge, representing the ignorant.

After I had finished some cleanup and additions, it was time to work on some details. I quickly added a purple gradient to the street below, while also adding the street lines with a light lavender. I had also added simple blue shading to the white subjects atop the bridge that remains a prominent figure within the piece. Most important though, I had created the detail work for the ghost-like people that represented minorities. I made them lack facial features with only having eyes, and I created these thick and thin outlines of color.

After the majority of my detail work was done, it was time to move onto creating some more interesting color additions to the piece, most prominently to the background of this piece. In order to do that, I introduced multiple new lines of color varying from bright oranges, bright blues, and this strong shade of magenta. I wanted to make sure that I incorporated many of the same colors Do Ho Suh's glass art installations had utilized. I added these pops of colors to the bridge and to the buildings. I had also created a small gradient of light at the bottom of the piece in order to give off a glowing effect.

Finally, to finish the piece off, It was time for the finishing aspect. Within this artwork, I wanted to create these abstract yet organic line designs in order to bring more attention to the important figures of this piece. I did this through creating these flowing lines and shapes that would force the viewer's eye to travel up and down, with their attention being able to shift from the ghost-like figures, to the huge lavender bridge that held these figures in pure white that were peering down into the crowd, or ignoring them completely.

Blue Paint and Popcorn Ceilings ○ Exhibition Piece

When finding good inspiration for an observational drawing, I often struggled with only coming across work that was incredibly precise. When I found Sasha Hartslief's work, I realized that an observation piece can take after almost any style, allowing yourself to mix realism and retain this air of artistic choice. So many of the references I ended up finding for observational drawing were all traditional, precise, incredibly smooth pencil drawings. Sasha's work was a breath of fresh air, as I really admired the way that texture is created within her artwork. Her drawings have this very distinct, thick painterly feel to them, with the shifts in hues and tones being apparent and not separate from one another, but still creating the illusion of depth. In addition, I wanted to recreate this sense of moodiness that was often present within her pieces, utilizing some darker grim colors alongside brighter lighting.

With Luca Pisano's work, I took a lot of inspiration from the way he was able to incorporate this realistic setting but still have a personal artistic feel to it, especially with the human figure that gives off a cartoon-like feel. I wanted to replicate this alongside the moody lighting that is also present within this observational piece he died, similar to Sasha's work previously shown, with the room cascaded in these blue hues accompanied with a contrasting light source.
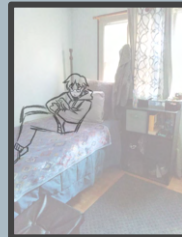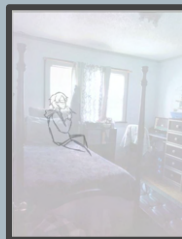
I'd like to start off by saying that I really like the final product of this artwork. For all my life I had only really focused on drawing characters, not really bothering to add any backgrounds to any of them that actually relied on incorporating them into an environment. This drawing was one of the first drawings where I was actually able to work with something completely different to me, which was observational drawing. For the longest time I had actively avoided drawing backgrounds in fear of them being really complex and being intimidated by all of the different angles within a composition. I was required to at least incorporate one observational drawing into my art portfolio when applying to colleges, so I was very much forced to work largely outside of my comfort zone when it came to this artwork, and I'm grateful for the opportunity.

I had already established that for this piece, I wanted to make sure that I would be able to capture both me and my bird within my artwork. I created a bunch of different sketches of how I would be able to execute this, all utilizing differing angles of my room, which I took with my phone. For my first concept, I made the focus of the piece really be centered around us, with me as a large component of the composition. My goal for this sketch was to aim for a natural looking moment in time, where I am simply sitting down and have Keiko flying towards me. I keep in mind the use of contrasting lighting within both of Luca and Sarah's work, making sure to position myself in a way where the bright light from the window would be able to also be a large focus of the overall artwork.

For my third concept, I wanted to use a differing pose, since my other two concepts had utilized this sitting position, I wanted to show that I could accurately incorporate a humanoid figure within an environment and interact with it dynamically. For this reason, I wanted to get a slightly different angle from my first concept, showing a little more of the center of my room, splitting the composition and center of attention into two halves. I also wanted to make sure that I was creating differing angles in which me and my bird would be placed in, as my previous concepts all differ when it comes down to perspective.

For my second concept, I really wanted to actually lean into a more observational focused sketch. In order to meet the requirements of the college portfolio restrictions, I really wanted to make sure that I was trying to incorporate as much observational drawing that I could within the piece. I knew that focusing too much on the humanoid aspects within it became a big concern of mine. I wanted this sketch to really accurately represent myself as a person, while still capturing the essence of a moment in time. Again, I wanted to utilize a rather natural, unassuming pose with me sitting down, holding my bird in my hand. I also felt that with this angle with the picture I took allowed for really great contrast, with the lights coming from the curtain and the dark shadows that lie near the front of my bed.


Now, for my final concept, I wanted deviate from all of the other concepts. All of the previous concepts that I had created all focused on the bed in my room, so for this concept, I wanted to use my chair to be able to show myself in full scale in reference to my room to practice observational skills. This sketch would also be the 2nd time that the right hand side of my room would be able to be featured. I needed to find a good balance between how much of my room and what parts of it I should include within the composition. Again, I wanted to focus on creating a unique but still natural looking pose in which captured a moment between me and Keiko.
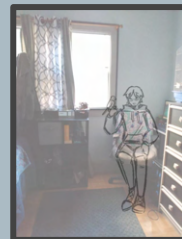
PROCESS AND EXPERIMENTATION OF WORK - *BLUE PAINT AND POPCORN CEILINGS*

I took small portions of some of the photos I had taken from my room in order to sample them to test out how I was going to approach my linework, coloring, and shading. I wanted to try and incorporate the crisp, precise perspective linework in Luca's work, while also making sure to consider the more blocky, thick lines and shapes of color within Sasha's work. My goal was to find a mix between both of these aspects and merge them into one as best as I could. My ultimate goal for this piece was to blend the techniques of two different artists and myself in order to create a mix between the two, incorporating styles and techniques featured in both of them. I experimented with the sample pictures I had taken of my room and used them as a guide for my finalized piece to reference back to. Trying to find a blend between all of these techniques was something I really had to consider, so it was very important to make sure that I made some tests prior to going into what would be my final observational drawing.
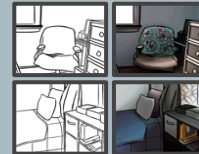
To start off the observational drawing, I first would have to take a picture of my room from the desired angle. My room is relatively small, so I was able to get most of it within the picture, leaving very few elements out of it. I transferred it into my drawing program. I set the image to a low opacity, and began outlining each aspect of the original photo such as my bed, my curtains, and my drawers. I wanted to capture the amount of detail present within Luca's pieces with all of the items captured within his artwork, while keeping the thick lines from the brushstrokes present within Sasha's work, often utilizing thick over thin lines for detail work.

After I had outlined all the subjects within my room, I filled in the walls and ceiling of my room. I worked on the ceiling first, carefully switching from my reference back to my recreation, trying my best to replicate all of the different shades present on my ceiling wall. I utilized a brush with low transparency so that I would be able to layer my colors up slowly in saturation much like a painting in order to mimic the painterly texture that is present within Sasha's artworks. I mixed this gradual coloring and shading with smooth shading by utilizing layering of colors alongside a smooth airbrush tool, making use of really trying to incorporate both of the techniques of Sasha Hartslief and Luca Pisanu.

It would be essential to have this shading in order to mimic depth within the piece as close to my reference image, with me trying to keep it realistic but still have that stylistic flair to it. For this, I continue utilizing this blend of Sasha's textured painterly style by layering my colors mixed with Lucas' smooth shading using the airbrush tool. I utilize a bunch of different colors to achieve the gradual transitions of color, utilizing blues, purples, and slight greens within the transition. I wanted the breaks of color to blend harmoniously with the smooth airbrushing that I incorporated into it.

I shifted my focus on coloring and creating some of the other aspects within the piece. To finalize the ceiling I created the light fixture within my room, using the same shading technique as the rest of the piece. After that, I began on flooring and objects within my room such as my carpet, my drawers, and my computer. I referenced my original photo I had taken, trying to match the colors to accurately resemble real life. I decided to focus on coloring in this section of the artwork first as it's where I often spend the most time,.

I work my way from top to bottom, finishing off some of the detail on some storage that lies beside my bed and some of the color for the bed itself. I loosely used my reference image as a guide for lighting, mainly using my original photograph as a way to accurately recreate the same colors to use in this observational drawing. I shifted from using deep blues, light blues, and even purples in order to create it. So many different shades were utilized in order to give off the effect of light hitting black leather.

I move onto the bed, as it takes up a huge focal point of the overall drawing. The angle that I chose transforms my bed into a centerpiece. Because of this, I wanted to make sure that I accurately depicted it as best as I could. The most prominent thing about my bed are the pillars on each corner, a canopy bed without the draping fabric. I set up the base colors for them while creating and shading nearly my entire bed, trying my best to recreate the patterned blanket.

I finished up coloring in and shading the bed frame, utilizing these deep burgundy purples that contrasted against the light blues of my room's walls. I moved my onto completing the way my bed looked by coloring and shading in my pillows and a surrounding sweater that sat on one of the black pillars of my bed. In addition, I had finalized shading on some of the closest parts of the piece, such as the black pillars that sit in front of my bed, as well as the blanket that is seen in front of the frame.

I felt conflicted if I should actually include myself within the final artwork, but I was very inspired as I wanted to further the feeling of personality as this observational artwork would be seen my colleges I would be applying to. Since my observational piece was centered on my room, it only made sense if I was in it, alongside my bird.. I also wanted to recreate Luca's stylization of observational work by including a stylized humanoid figure within the piece.
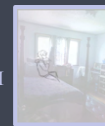
For this piece, I utilized a textured brush to create thin, but unique line work for myself, going over my sketch and adjusting where it needed to be. After I had finished the line work , I then began the coloring phase. It would be a little challenging to color match myself into the piece as my original photo doesn't feature myself in it, but I tried my best to use somewhat desaturated colors in order to fit the mood of the rest of the piece, such as the dark purples and blues that are surrounding me.

It was time to move onto the very final stages of this observational drawing. I proceeded to give my bird and myself dimension through shading. I utilized the smooth shading of Luca and continued to mimic Sasha's painterly look through layered saturation of shading. Since the left side of the photograph and artwork end up having lots of dark purple hues, I utilized the same deep purples for the shading of myself, as my back is turned towards the left side of the piece.

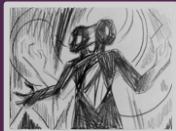# *Dysphoria* ○ **Exhibition Piece**

PLANNING OF WORK

For my first concept, I aimed to create a feeling of this higher force or sense of watchfulness within this concept, featuring two smaller humanoid figures as a huge one looms overhead. I wanted to capture this centralized composition that is often featured within The Spot's transformation scene. I really wanted to hone in the idea that this project would be a representation of the abstraction of ones identity, continuously struggling to shape around oneself.

For my next concept, I wanted to focus more on the humanoid figures within the scene. I also wanted to make sure I made a concept that explored abstraction. With my previous concept, it utilized a majority of very flowy, smooth lines within the background. I wanted to make sure I was implementing both rigid and smooth lines and shapes within my concepts to plan appropriately for my finalized piece. I aimed to focus more on the split in one's identity, as well as the meshing between the two.

My next concept, I wanted to explore a differing perspective. Both of my previous concept sketches had utilized a front facing perspective, as well as featuring multiple humanoid figures within the composition. I wanted this concept to stray away from these aspects and instead work from a different perspective of the humanoid figure, as well as having it be solo figure in the work.

For my final concept, I shifted back towards this front facing perspective that I've been working with. I wanted this concept to focus on duplication, as in the scene I am drawing inspiration from in Spiderverse often utilizes the technique of distorting and reshaping many of the elements of the human form in order to convey this disconnection of reality. I wanted this concept to particularly convey the idea of transformation.
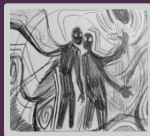
This piece serves as a representation of the turmoil that plagues one's identity, with an emphasis on the dysphoria that one can go through as a trans individual. I wanted to create a piece that could represent my internal feelings and struggles as a trans person. I was greatly inspired by The Spot's transformation scene in Spider-Man: Across the Spiderverse, particularly the exploration of the human form, the abstract yet intricate details within the scene, and the precision yet chaotic blend of lines and shapes within the composition of each frame.

EXPERIMENTATION
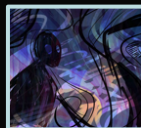
Some of the most prominent factors in The Spot's transformation scene in Spiderverse was the abstraction of the human form and the chaotic shapes and lines. As an artist who utilizes a lot of abstract elements within my own work, I quickly became interested in replicating the techniques present in the scene that inspired me. For most of my abstract work, they often feature very clean, precise line work, alongside smooth shapes. I often utilize very flowy abstraction within my pieces, and that was something that I would need to set aside and instead experiment with replicating the techniques used within the Spiderverse scene.

INSPIRATION OF ARTWORK

When Spider-Man: Across the Spiderverse came out in theaters, I was absolutely blown away by the sheer quality and passion that practically bleeds from it.
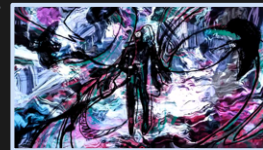
Spiderverse and its prequel have drastically shaped the world of art and animation as we know it, popularizing so many different techniques that are now being integrated into modern animation. I was in awe during nearly every scene of this movie, as it was so artistically strong in even the most mundane of moments. Spiderverse became such an inspirational work to me and so many different artists and animators in the world.

Within this movie, there were so many risks and opportunities taken that pushed the bounds of expression within an animated work. For me, one of the most impactful scenes of the entire movie to me that stuck with me artistically was The Spot's transformation within the movie. As someone who enjoys and creates abstract art, this scene really stood out to me. Truly, it served as one of those scenes you couldn't stop replaying. I was so enamored by how this scene was able to capture such intense emotion through its lines and shapes, as well as color. The chaotic yet flowing nature of all of the lines and the backgrounds was something that I really wanted to replicate within my own artwork.
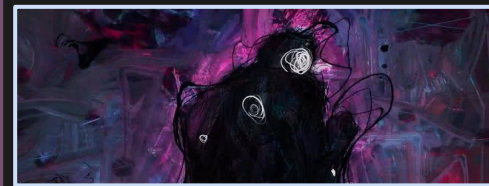
PROCESS OF ARTWORK *DYSPHORIA*.

To start off my final project, I first had to create a base background of color for my drawing. I wanted to make sure that I utilized a lot of colors that were present within the scene from Spiderverse I drew inspiration from, utilizing random splotches of purples, blues, and magentas. This part was necessary but didn't require much detail, as I simply needed a baseline for this piece to work with, as I would be utilizing other photos to build my background like a collage.

Next, I would begin the collage aspects of this digital piece. For my finalized piece, I wanted to combine all of the experimental drawings that I had done prior to starting on this final project. I believed that in doing this that I would create a real sense of chaotic lines and shapes, as is present within the scene of The Spot's transformation. I included two of my experimental drawings, stacking them on each other and adjusting the opacity to create a unique background.
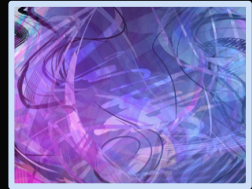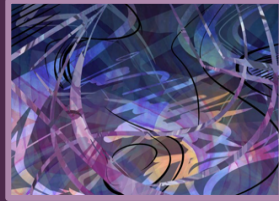
After that, I then included the other two experimental drawings that I did, again layering and adjusting the opacity of all of the drawings in order to create new patterns. For this process, I often flipped and skewed the perspectives of my original experimental drawings in order to find out what would make the most interesting designs, shapes, and lines. In addition to that, I adjusted the color of the overall piece using the "add" effect, making it brighter.

Once I had settled on the different layerings of my experimental drawings, I then moved onto replicating the texture that is shown within my source of inspiration. Within The Spot's transformation, the backgrounds are often composed of this abstract, colorful scene, with a variety of different textures and organic patterns scattered about. In order to try and replicate this, I took photos of some patterned tiles within my home and used the "overlay" effect to integrate it within the background.

I shifted my focus to creating the actual humanoids that would be present within this drawing after I had finished setting a good base for the background. The scene from Spiderverse with The Spot I drew inspiration from illustrates him as this dark, void-like being that is being constantly abstracted. I wanted to replicate this with my own piece, playing with the expression of the human form and abstraction with two people conjoined together in one single emptied body.

After I had finished the rough sketch for the pose my humanoids would be in, I then proceeded to create what would act as the final line and color work for it. Since Spiderverse depicted The Spot as this dark entity, I did the same, keeping the humanoids colored in with this pitch black. In addition, the shapes and lines that make up The Spot are often messy, out of place, and give off an unrefined, unfinished look. I replicated this by creating these messy lines that traced the humanoids' body.

Once I was done implementing the finalized version of the humanoids in my drawing, it was time to shift my focus again on the background. I took this time to add more elements to the humanoids, creating their pure white facial features and creating this texture of color within their bodies. I noticed this technique was used with The Spot, as although his body is pitch black, there are scratches of color. I brightened the composition and added more sampling to add to this collage of a background.

Some of the sampled experimental drawings had already implemented some dark lines and shapes within the composition, but I would now have to make additions and do clean up. Since a lot of the experimental drawings I had made were pretty messy, I touched up some areas to show a little more cohesiveness, but still kept the chaotic aspects. In addition, I incorporated these black lines with pops of colors that emanated from the humanoid figures, similar to Spiderverse.
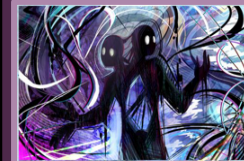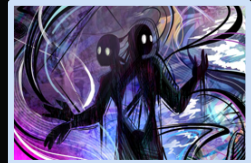
To finish the piece off, I focused on implementing the abstract energy that The Spot's transformation scene had captured. I wanted incorporate lines, shapes, and colors that had purpose but still shared disorderly characteristics. I really allowed myself to simply add lines and shapes where I had liked without much thought, allowing for a variable of randomness within my work. I then I added small details of color that would help separate and mix the humanoids to the background of the piece.