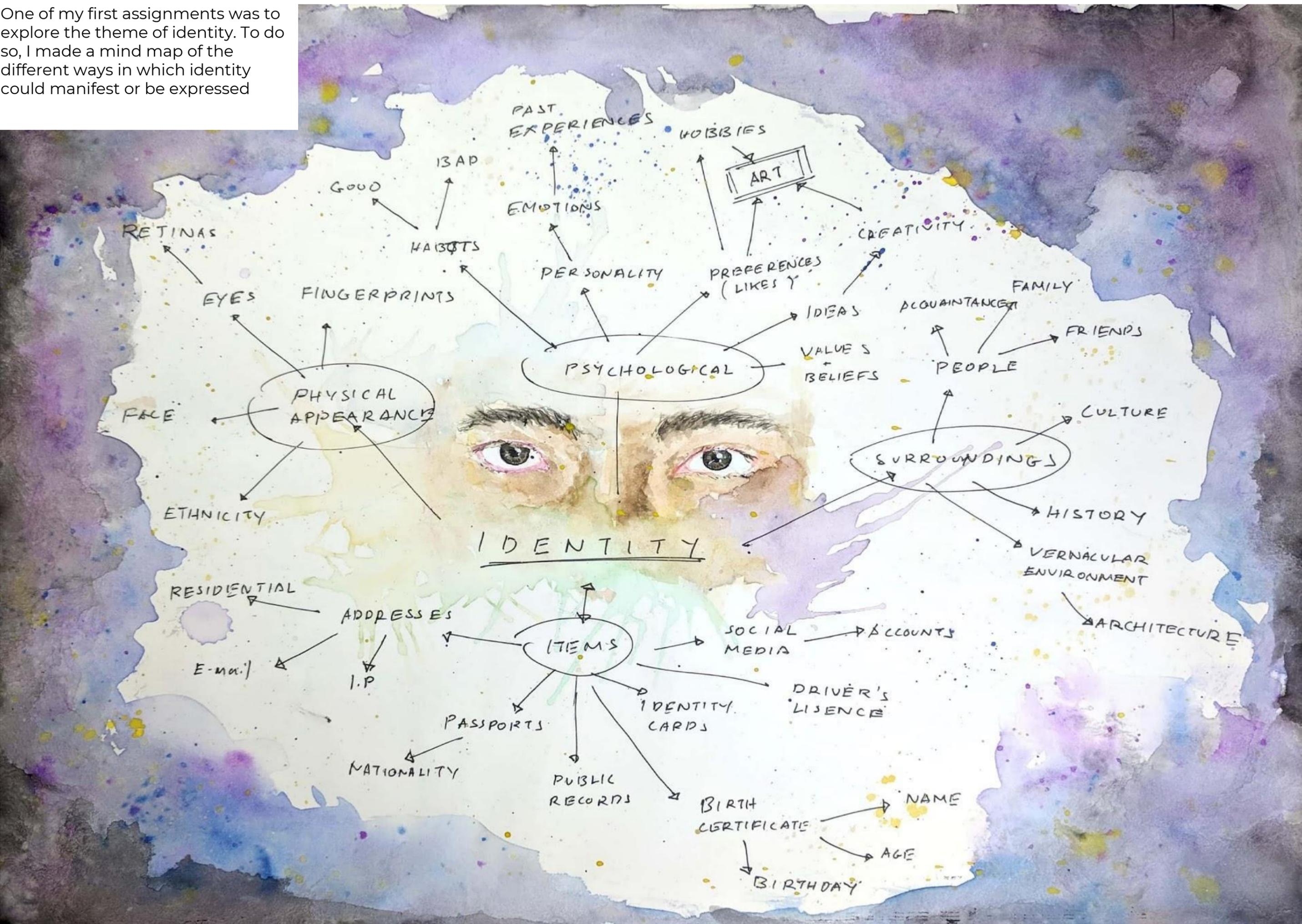


One of my first assignments was to explore the theme of identity. To do so, I made a mind map of the different ways in which identity could manifest or be expressed



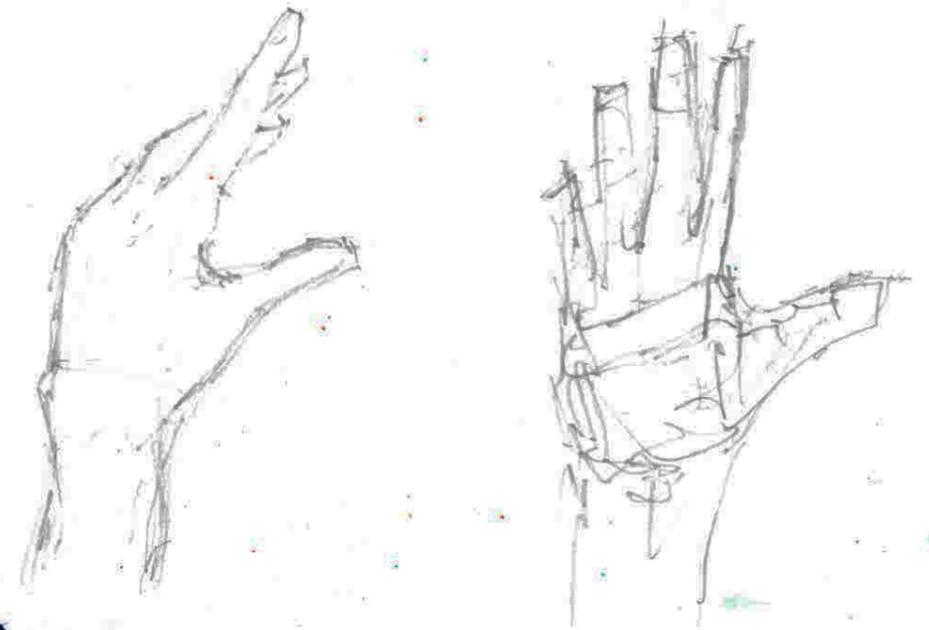
DRAWING HANDS

For the warm-up activity, I was tasked with drawing hands. One with my unorthodox hand in under a minute, one with my orthodox hand under one minute, two minutes, and one 25+ minute observational drawing. Unsurprisingly, I found the first activity daunting given my lack of practice with said hand.

Naturally, the longer the time allocated for the task, the better my drawing was.

For the 25+ minute observational drawing, I was watching memes during my free time. I came across one titled "Salt-bae," which was about a man sensually sprinkling salt over meat. I was then inspired to draw something similar.

1 MINUTE SKETCH WITH NON-ORTHODOX HAND



amanda clyne: twisted



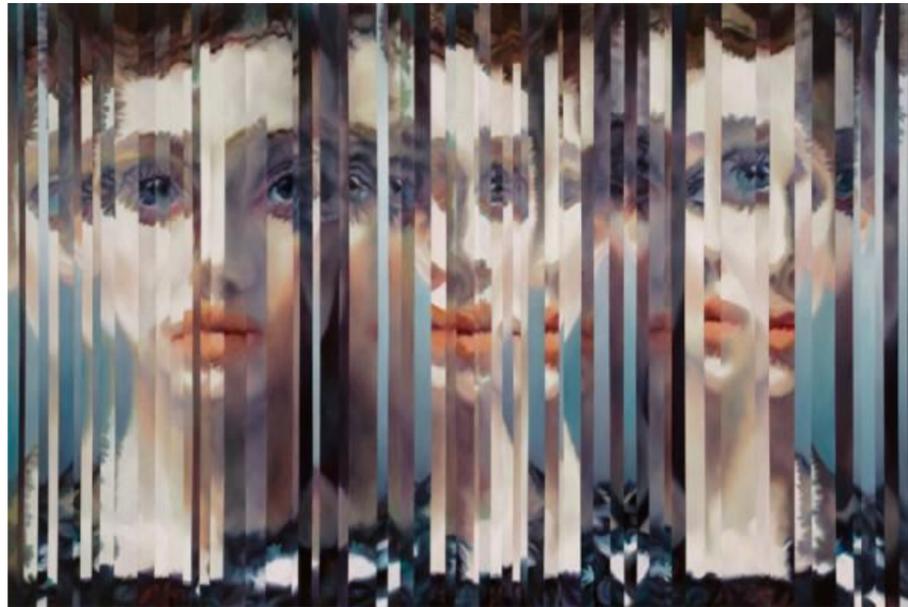
Amanda Clyne¹

Amanda Clyne is a corporate lawyer-turned-painter, after experiencing trauma from the tragic events of 9/11. She left her firm to study at the school of visual arts in new york, and later graduated from OCAD University in 2009.

Clyne 's work particularly focuses on portraits and representations of femininity through textiles and couture

She culls images from fashion magazines and reprints them in a manner that ensures that they remain wet and do not adhere. She photographs the image as it morphs over time. The final piece is comprised of fragments of the photographs at various stages of dissolution.

Her works remind me of mirrors and shows that there is a greater depth to personality or character of her subjects.



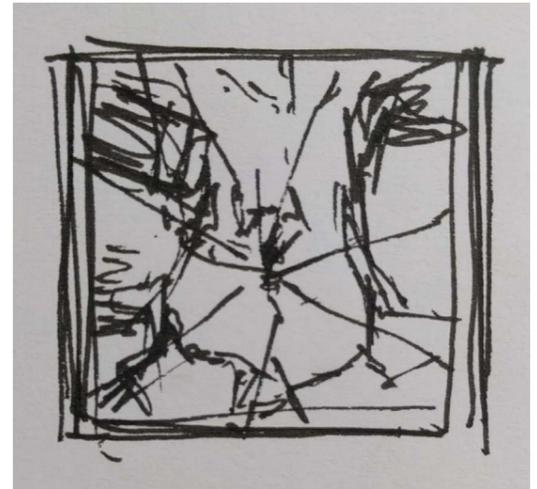
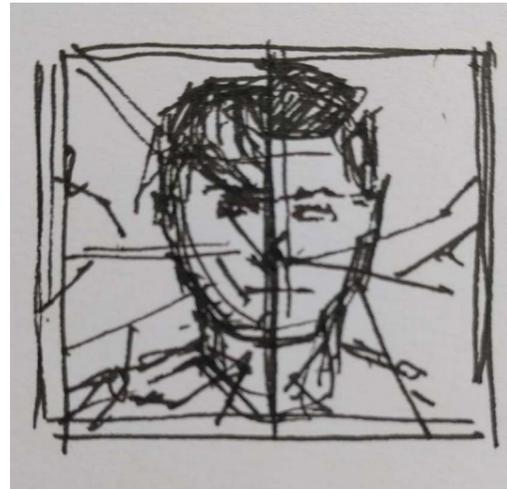
Twisted (48" x 72") ,Amanda Clyne¹

I was inspired by the theme of identity and Amanda Clyne's work create my own piece on fragments, in a literal sense. I wanted to use fragments to show the fragmented nature of the human psyche; to ask, "what is it that makes us who we are?" "Is the me from yesterday, the same as today, or tomorrow?" This further tied into the theme of identity that I was exploring.

After careful planning, I decided that I would show the gradual change one experiences in life. The person we were yesterday, may not be the person we are today, even tomorrow. I would show this by depicting two versions of myself, one past, and one present.

The cracked mirror shows the fragmentation that occurs in our personalities as we grow into different people.

However, I had a hard time deciding between having the two faces merged together to show that both versions are of me, but at different points in my life; or whether I should have them separated to symbolise the jarring changes that one may experience in life.



concept sketches

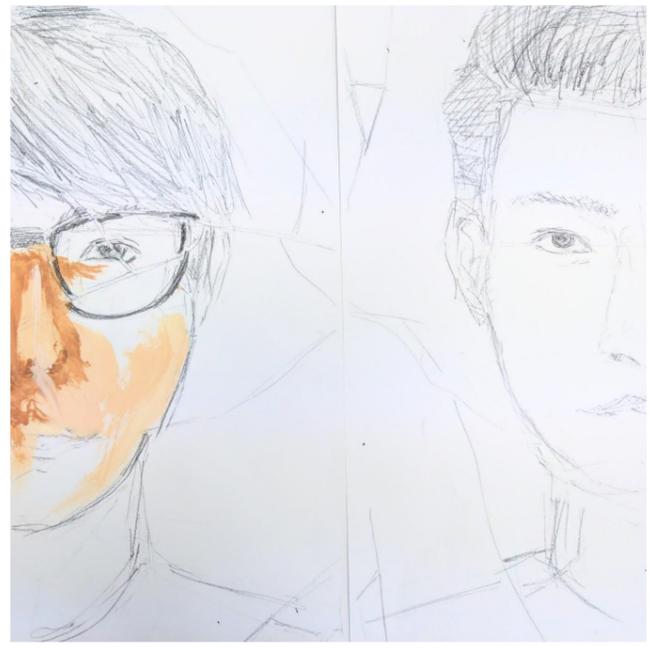
¹ Amanda Clyne, About the Artist, *Amanda Clyne* [website], n.d., image <<https://www.amandaclyne.com/portfolio>> accessed 26 March 2018

² Amanda Clyne, Portfolio, Portrait Series, *Amanda Clyne* [website] n.d., image <<https://www.amandaclyne.com/portfolio>> accessed 26 March 2018

³ (background) Amanda Clyne, Portfolio, Wallflower Series, *Amanda Clyne* [website] n.d., image <<https://www.amandaclyne.com/portfolio>> accessed 26 March 2018

before and after: process

Since I had never painted with acrylics before (at the time), I decided to practise on sketches. I then transferred my sketch onto a piece of A3 paper for practice painting. It was initially challenging to blend the paints on paper, but I eventually found it easy as I moved on to a canvas.



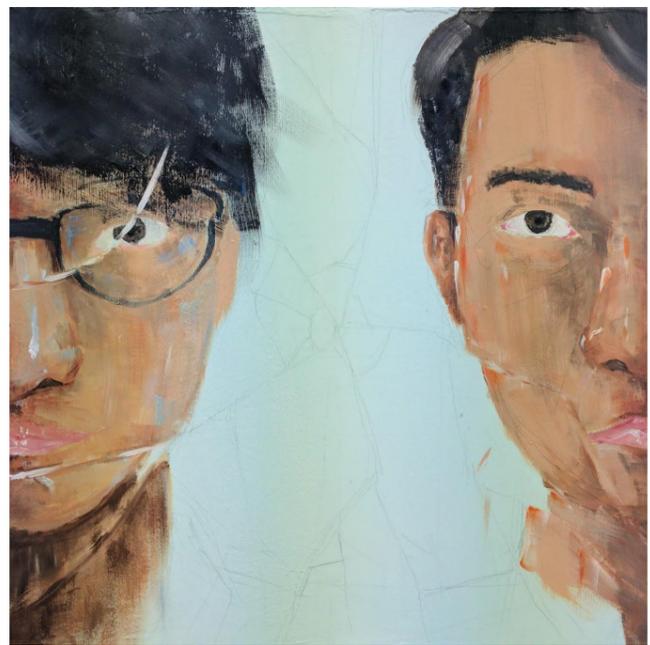
After toying around with the colours, I managed to add a little depth to the faces. However, it was still far from lifelike.

I also attempted to make the cracked glass appear realistic by painting the cracks white, and adding refracted light. However, it looks more akin to a cobweb.



I chose turquoise for the base as it is similar to glass, and has compliments skin tones. The faces were especially challenging as I had to fragment them and yet have pleasing proportions.

Another problem was accurately mixing skin tones. The skin here look especially flat and dull; and I had trouble creating depth.



I solved the problem of the glass looking like a cobweb by adding tints of different colours.

Unfortunately, the faces still do not look particularly lifelike, even after I darkened the shadows even more.

I will have to look practise more with regards to portrait drawing and painting.



After working on "Before and After" I realised that I required more practise with portraits, as I have difficulty capturing the likeness of a subject. Practising portraits also further ties into my exploration of identity

PORTRAITS

Muhammad Ali - 60 minutes

To practice drawing portraits, I used reference photos of famous celebrities found on the internet. I use this method to focus on capturing the overall likeness of the subject.

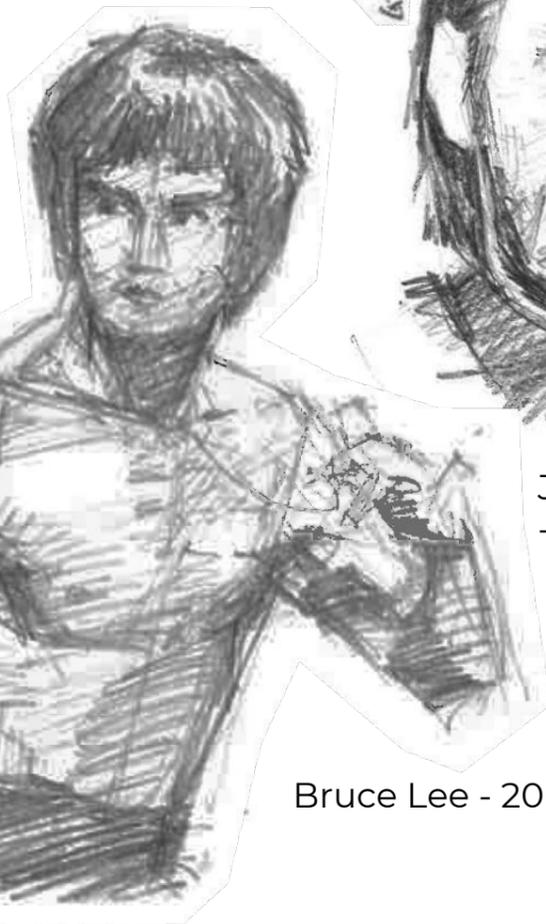
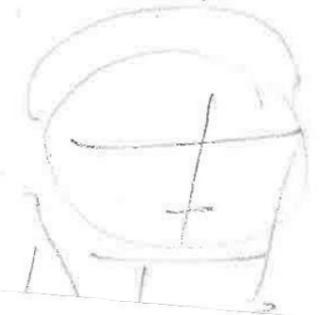
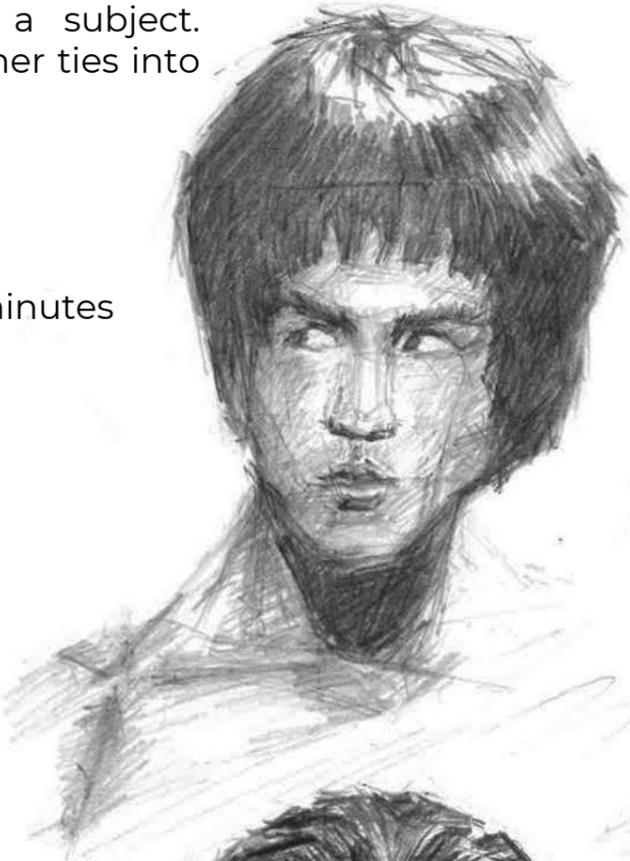
Bruce Lee - 75 minutes

Using a subject with whom I am familiar with would be difficult to judge the likeness of my portrait. This is because I would be able to instantly recognise any anomalies in my drawings

TECHNIQUE

- For my portraits, I typically use a standard guideline/frame to ensure all parts are in place.

Eyes are too small



John Wick (Keanu Reeves) - 30 minutes

My portrait of John Wick/Keanu Reeves is not particularly good, especially when compared to my other two portraits of Bruce Lee and Muhammed Ali.

However, I believe that his likeness was captured sufficiently.



FORESHORTENING



Bruce Lee - 20 minutes

zaha hadid: confetti + metropolis



Zaha Hadid ⁴

Zaha Hadid was a very prominent figure in the architecture industry, not just for being the most renowned female architect of all time, but simply an architect. She not only won the RIBA and the Pritzker, but also went on to influence architecture itself. Although she did not restrict herself to simply one architectural style, she popularised using unorthodox shapes for buildings.

While she is more prominently known for her buildings, I find her conceptual paintings very intriguing, as she does not explicitly design buildings, but rather captures the motion that she wishes to convey through her buildings.

Confetti is a concept painting for Hong Kong's *the Peak* project, which went to another architecture firm.

While it did not lead to a new project for her, *Confetti* managed to resonate with me, perhaps because of the explosive motion that was well captured



Metropolis (1988), Zaha Hadid ⁶

Zaha Hadid's *Metropolis* was commissioned for an exhibition at the ICA, which her painting was named after - *Metropolis: New British Architecture and the City*. The Exhibition explored different aspects of the metropolis.

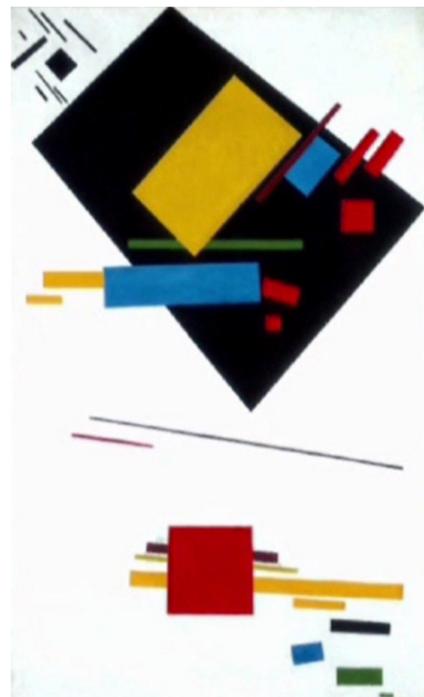
Zaha Hadid's *Metropolis* is a homage to London by providing a look at the evolution of London from a series of villages to a sprawling city. The abstract lines and shapes of the painting represent the many streets and boroughs of London.

Confetti - the Peak (1982-1983), Zaha Hadid ⁵

In a BBC interview, Zaha Hadid discusses her main inspiration for her paintings and architectural style. She mainly credits Kazimir Malevich, a Russian artist who led the Russian Suprematist movement. His paintings, like Zaha Hadid's, are made up of geometric shapes with solid colours. Zaha Hadid builds upon this concept by adding her signature abstractive and explosive style.

Both *Confetti* and *Metropolis* feature her signature explosive style, which she also implements in many of her buildings. Her unique style captivated me, and has motivated me to implement a similar motif in several of my artworks.

Black Trapezium and Red Square (1915), Kazimir Malevich ⁷ (left) and *Malevich's Tektonik* ⁸



⁴ P. Sisson, "Zaha Hadid Architects Thanks Supporters, Discusses 4 Projects Finishing in 2016", *Curbed*, 19 April 2016, image <<https://www.curbed.com/2016/4/19/11458152/zaha-hadid-architects-update-2016-projects>> accessed 25 March 2018.

⁵ Zaha Hadid Architects, 'The Peak Leisure Club, Confetti', *Zaha Hadid Architects* [website], n.d. image <<http://www.zaha-hadid.com/architecture/the-peak-leisure-club/>> accessed 20 September 2017.

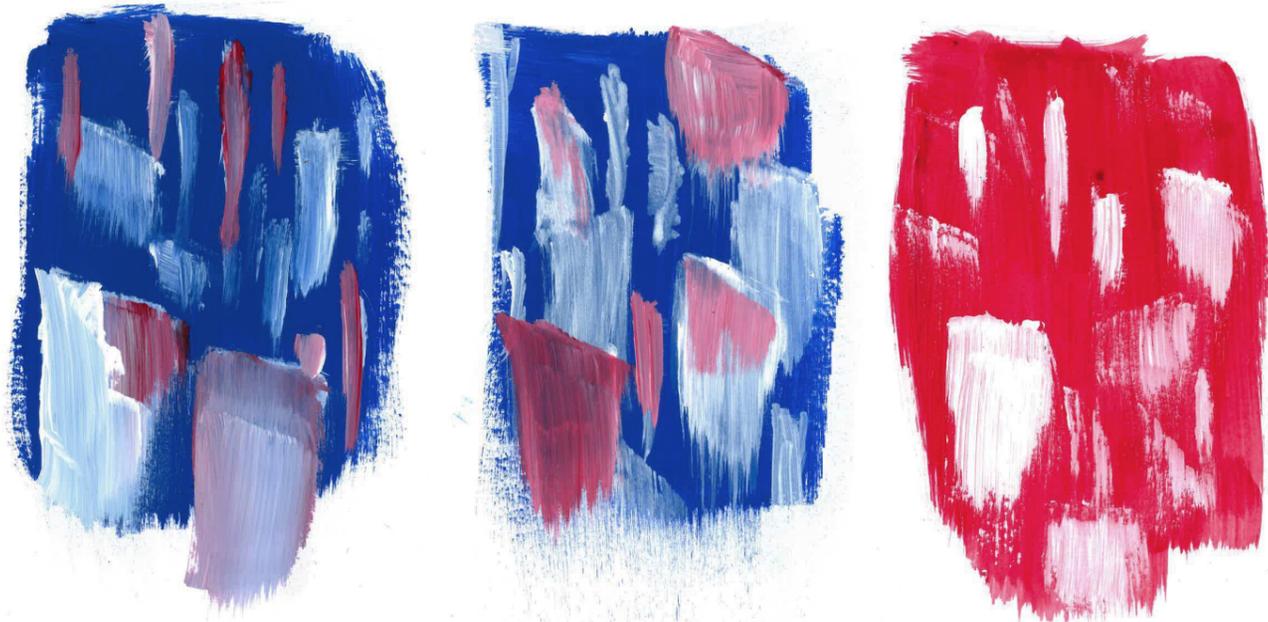
⁶ Zaha Hadid Architects, 'Metropolis', *Zaha Hadid Architects* [website], n.d. image, <<http://www.zaha-hadid.com/design/metropolis/>> accessed 19 September 2017.

⁷ Zaha Hadid Architects, 'Malevich's Tektonik', *Zaha Hadid Architects* [website], n.d. image <<http://www.zaha-hadid.com/architecture/malevichs-tektonik/>> accessed 21 September 2017.

⁸ BBC Four, 'Zaha Hadid and Malevich's Tektonik', *BBC Four* [website], 9 September 2014, screenshot <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p026cd0w>> accessed 22 September 2017.

deconstructivism: experimentation

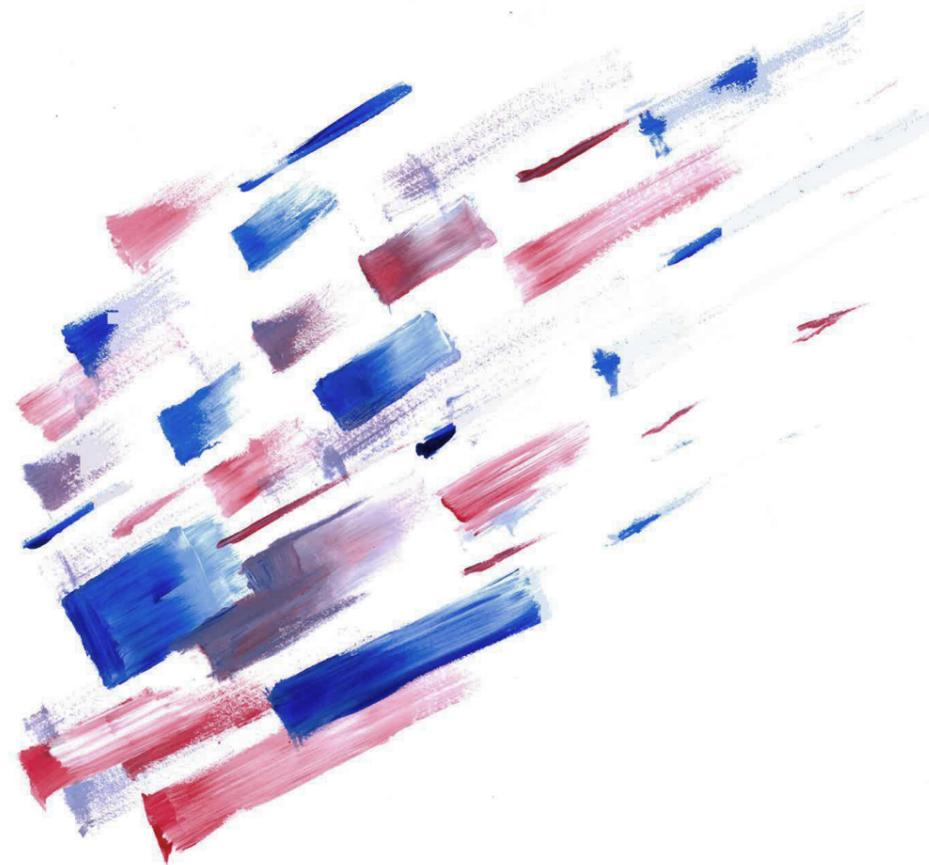
After studying Zaha Hadid, I was inspired to experiment with acrylic paint in an attempt to recreate her visual style



After a few attempts, I realised that it was incredibly hard to paint angular shapes. Flatter and thinner brushes helped, but it was still not close enough to Zaha Hadid's conceptual paintings. Instead, I chose to experiment with colour schemes, and found that a triadic colour scheme of blue, white and red was especially eye-catching.

I also observed that by using quick brush strokes to make trails of paint, I can make the "shards" appear as if they are moving upwards, or any direction.

After more experimentation, I also find that Zaha Hadid's use of a neutral background in *Confetti* helps the "shards" pop more, and having the "shards" be parallel to one another instead of painting them to appear as if they had just exploded, creates a sense of satisfaction, perhaps due to the alignment of the lines.



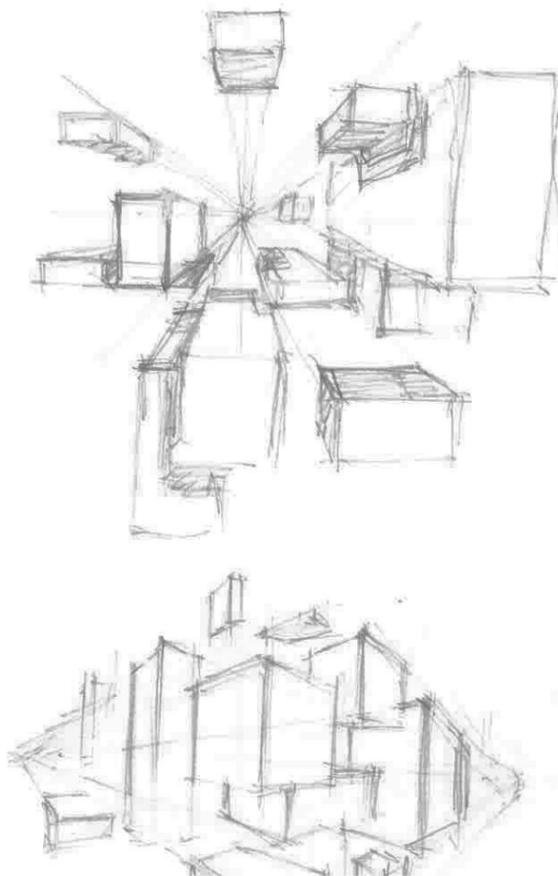
Using perspective lines as a reference, perhaps I could make the "shards" pop out even more by making them appear three-dimensional?

I tried out this theory, by drawing standard vanishing point exercises. I find that while they do pop more, visually; I think that after adding colours, the "shards" will lose their lightweight quality.

Through my experimentation, I was inspired to create a piece used the same explosive motif to represent the overwhelming feeling of having work pile up throughout the IB Diploma Programme.

I will depict this by using "shards" of paper that swirl around a red, angular spiral, which represents the looming deadlines.

To have the "shards" maintain their weightless quality, I will not make them three dimensional, but still incorporate a vanishing point, to make it seem as though they are emerging from the canvas



Deadlines: process

I first started by painting the background on the canvas. To create a more even coat of paint, I decided to use a sponge roller, instead of a traditional brush. This seemed to help, as the layer of paint looks smoother than when I experimented using a brush.

After proving effective, I decided to use the same method for the lines. To paint thin, straight lines, I used masking tape to cover the parts of the canvas which I did not want to paint.

The end result was stunning, as it was almost exactly as I had planned.

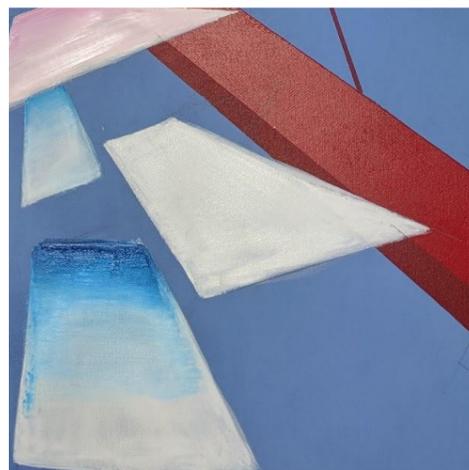
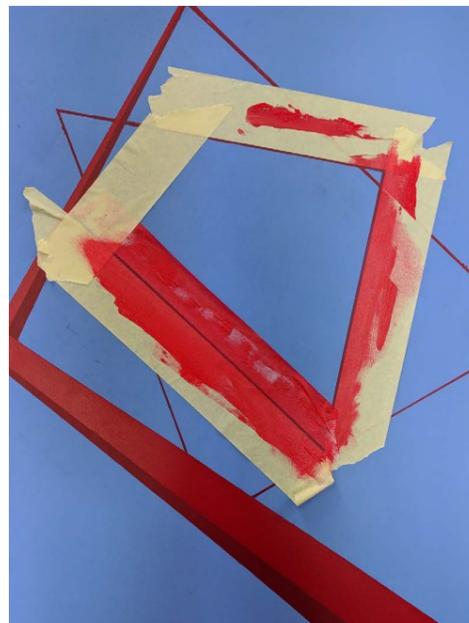
As for the "shards" of paper, I attempted to paint them without the aid of masking tape, since I wanted them to appear flexible, and that they could swirl and curve around the red swirl.

Unfortunately, this did not go as well as I had planned, since the difference in the edges was incredibly jarring.

The clean lines of red swirl only exaggerate the blunt lines of the "shards" of paper.

I then decided to simply paint "shards" of paper that were straight. While this strayed from my original vision, it made for a more cohesive visual motif of angular lines.

One trade-off was that the process of painting each "shard" was incredibly time consuming



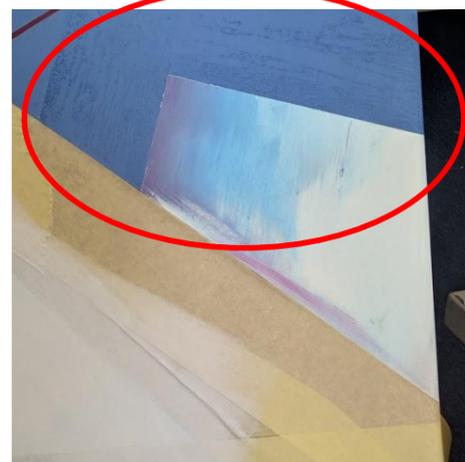
To mitigate this, I decided to paint multiple shards at once. This seems to speed up the process greatly. However, I am worried that in doing so, I will be unable to spot any mistakes made.



For the "shards" that were at the back, I intentionally painted them using a free-hand, using the technique I gained after making this mistake earlier.

This creates a depth effect, and makes

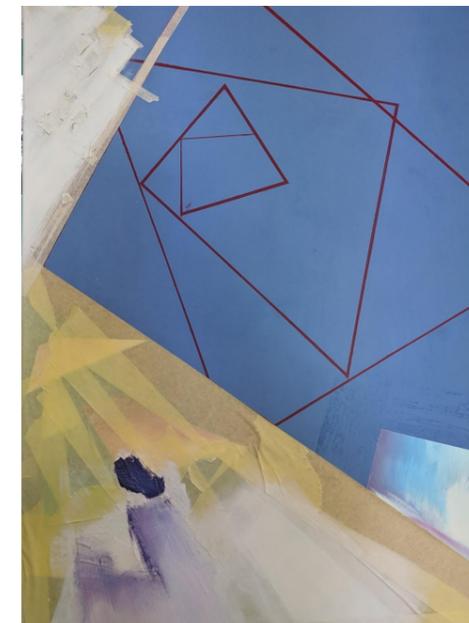
the "shards appear further away.



After a few weeks of work on this piece, I just realised that there was a mistake made when I pulled the masking tape off with too much force, leaving marks on the canvas

Overall, I am rather satisfied with this piece. However, to cover up the marks left by pulling the masking tape off with too much force, I had to paint them over. This resulted in irregularities in the background, which slightly deviated from my vision.

Perhaps I will be able to use the techniques I have learnt through trial and error for another similar artwork



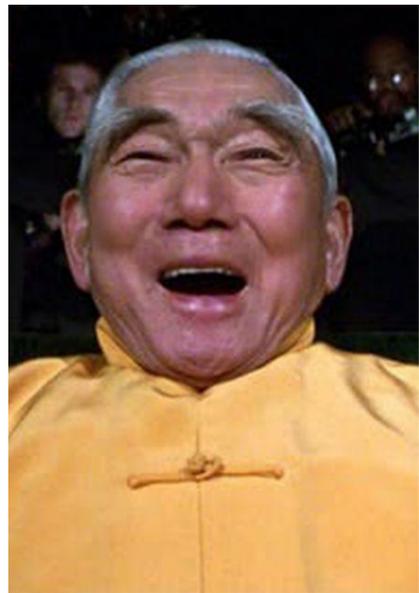
i am asian: planning

Inspiration

Similar to Before and After, I was also inspired by the theme of Identity. This time, the theme of identity led me to question the identity of asians.

The movie Zoolander revolves around the planned assassination of the Malaysian prime minister. In the movie, the prime minister is portrayed as a stereotypical chinese man, even though the prime minister and the majority of citizens in Malaysia are Malay.

Thus, I wanted to showcase the diversity among Asians in response.



Malaysian Prime Minister, Zoolander⁹



Burger King advertisement¹⁰



Confetti - the Peak (1982-1983), Zaha Hadid¹¹

Stylistically, I was inspired by text heavy wallpapers from McDonald's and Burger King. I was also inspired by Zaha Hadid's signature explosive style.

⁹ Screenshot from Zoolander

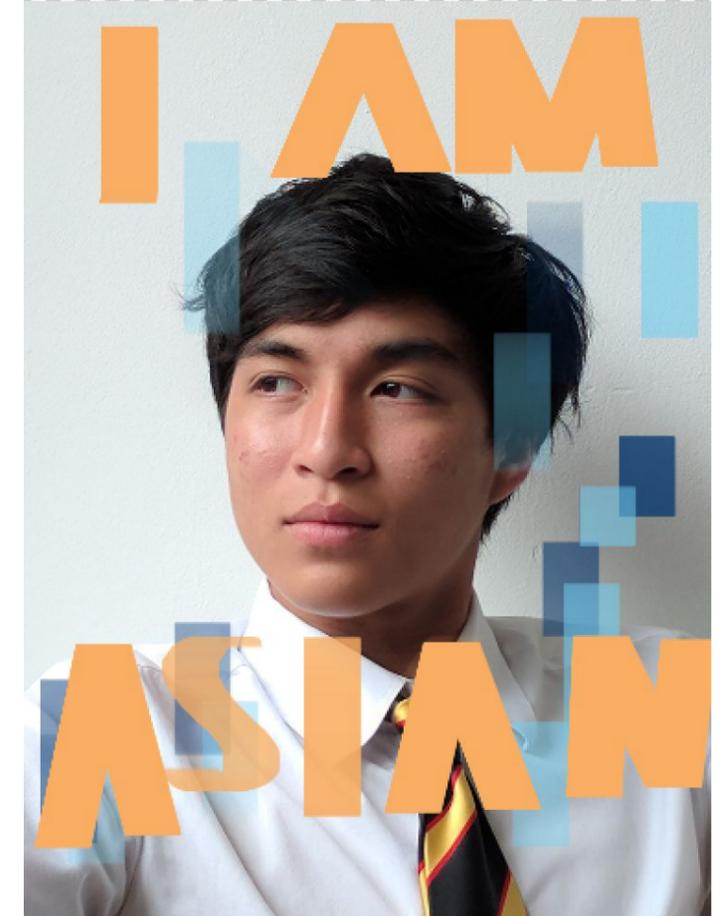
¹⁰ Screenshot from Burger King App

¹¹ Zaha Hadid Architects, 'The Peak Leisure Club, Confetti', Zaha Hadid Architects [website], n.d. image <<http://www.zaha-hadid.com/architecture/the-peak-leisure-club/>> accessed 20 September 2017.

I wanted to use the visual style of a poster to invoke the feeling of rebellion, to show that we, as consumers, should stand up to production companies and demand proper representation in Hollywood.



Planning process



I plan to create a series of posters featuring my asian friends from different countries, with the title "I AM ASIAN" in bold. This is meant to highlight the diversity among Asians, as the term "Asians" should refer to all of the people native to asia, not just the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or any other race considered to be "Oriental". The title highlights the absurdity of referring to such an entire continent of diverse groups as "Asians"

I hope that through this piece, I can raise awareness regarding this stereotyping, and possibly inspire other asians to stand up afianst this

i am asian: process

At first, I was thinking of photographing my friends of different ethnicities as a series. Later on, I decided that a series of posters would better convey my message, after experimenting with watercolour posters



To start my poster, I first select background for the image. Then I trace the outlines and use the colour picker tool as a guide. Using the pictures as a reference, I paint a rough version of the portraits, using colours more appropriate to the backgrounds.

I chose bright backgrounds to catch the viewers' attention, since the purpose of a poster is to draw attention to a particular message.

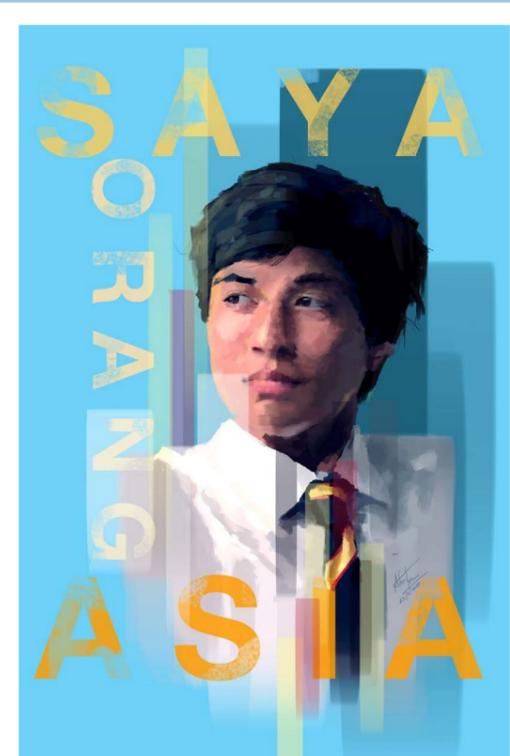


After that, I work using my selected colours and add more detail to the painting and blending the colours together.

I also tweaked the colour of the background as I felt that a more pastel colour would be more pleasing to the eye.

I then added fragments of colour, in a similar manner to Zaha Hadid's confetti. Using layers, I added some at the back, and some at the front.

Once the portrait is complete, I add the phrase "Saya orang Asia", which translates to "I am Asian". This is meant to highlight the absurdity of stereotyping an entire continent of people as Chinese, Japanese or Korean, since there are many more races, such as Malay, Indian, Pakistani, and other aboriginal tribes.



This message will be further enhanced when viewed in together with the other posters (which I have yet to complete) that have the same phrase in other languages.

However, Upon reflection, I may choose to rework this poster, as I feel that I should have a stronger purpose for including the fragments, rather than just including them for aesthetic purposes. Currently, the message of the poster would be the same, with or without the fragments.

fragments: planning

After reflecting on my works more, I believed that my series "I am Asian" was lacking in purpose, but was visually pleasing, the opposite of my piece "Before and After". As such, I decided to marry the two concepts, using the motif of "fragments" from "Before and After" which represent a fragmented personality, and the explosive and more realistic visual style of "I am Asian".

Instead of unsubtly portraying the changes in personality a person undergoes through two versions of myself, I instead decide to depict this through floating "fragments" or "shards" that form an unfinished portrait.

The unfinished portrait represents how our personalities are never complete, or finished growing, through the "fragments" of personalities or traits which we acquire from our friends and acquaintances throughout our daily lives

process

I start by salvaging the main part of my previous piece. I change the canvas size to be a thinner and taller aspect ratio to create a floating effect.

I also changed the background to be less saturated to create more emphasis on the subject.



I then change the "fragments/shards" to be thinner to reflect the thinner and taller canvas size.

This also further enhances the feeling that the portrait is floating.



I then create a new layer to add even more shards to emphasize just how much of what we regard as to be our personality is influenced by external factors

I add darker "fragments/shards" at the bottom of the painting to ground it.

As a few final details, I copy and paste a few elements from the portrait to form reflective "fragments/shards".

Compared to my previous two pieces involving "fragments" and "shards", I am very satisfied with the final outcome of this piece.

I may decide to revisit this piece to start a series of paintings.

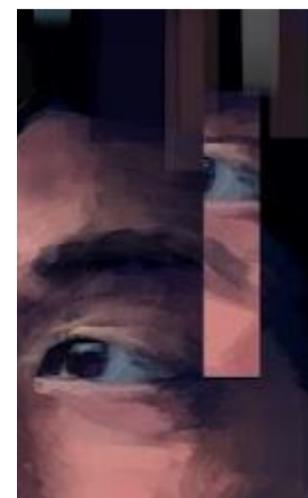
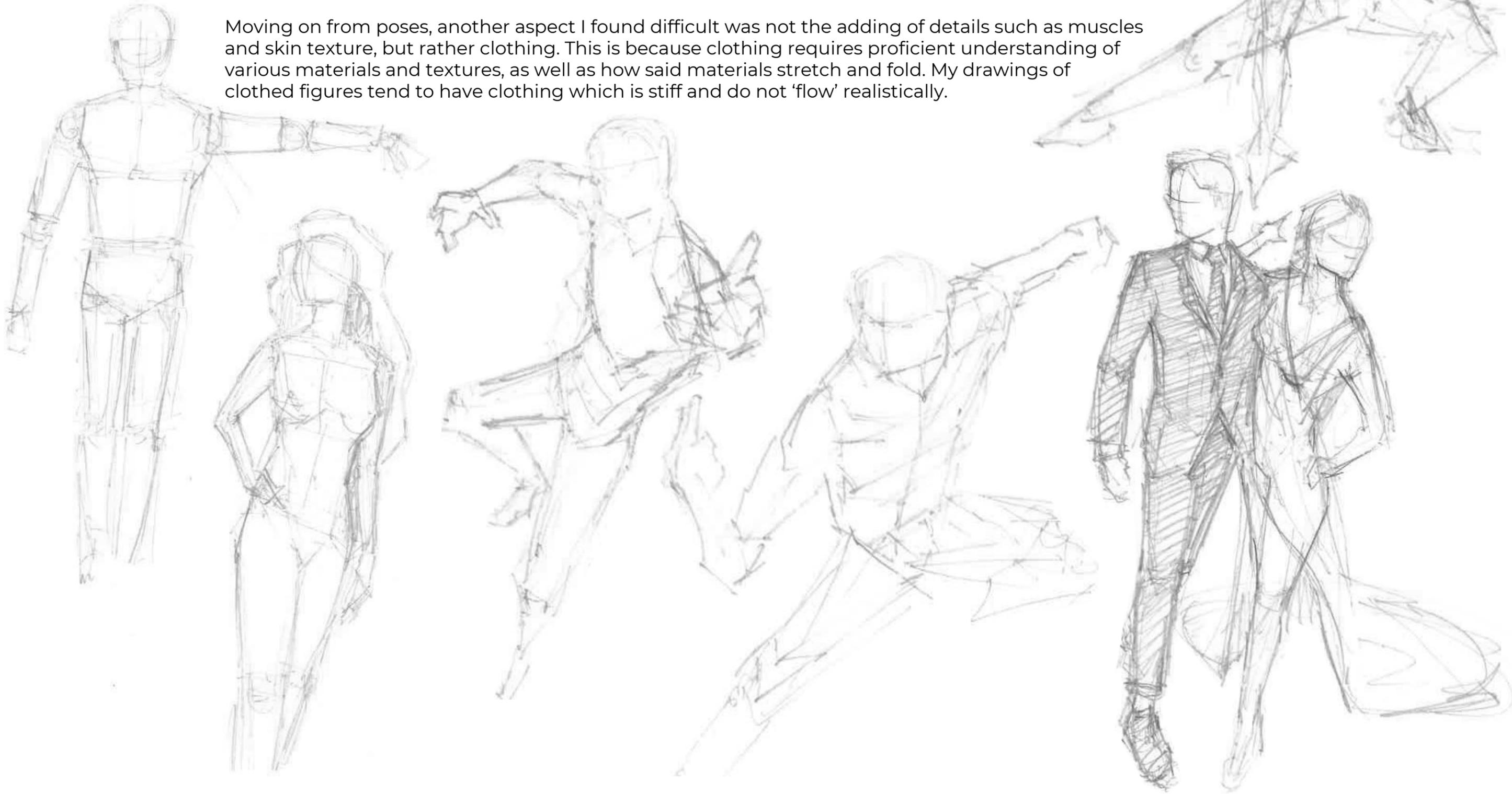


figure drawing

To practise figure drawing, I first learned how to draw the basic shape, and frame of the figure to learn about the accurate proportions of the average human body.

I then moved on to more dynamic poses, such as leaps and martial arts moves, which were more complex, and required more techniques such as foreshortening and taking into account realistic joint positions. One aspect that I found particularly difficult to learn was the structure of the spine of a subject when in a dynamic pose.

Moving on from poses, another aspect I found difficult was not the adding of details such as muscles and skin texture, but rather clothing. This is because clothing requires proficient understanding of various materials and textures, as well as how said materials stretch and fold. My drawings of clothed figures tend to have clothing which is stiff and do not 'flow' realistically.



michael wolf

architecture of density/night



¹² A779, *Architecture of Density*, 2006,
Michael Wolf,
Kodak endura Paper,
Lightjet process,
mounted on dibond
20 x 130 cm²



¹³ Night7, *Night*, 2006,
Michael Wolf,
Kodak endura Paper,
Lightjet process,
mounted on dibond
20 x 130 cm²

Michael Wolf is a German Photographer. He worked as a photojournalist in Hong Kong for a magazine for 8 years. He soon grew tired of the profession, calling it “stupid”. Realizing that he had never once photographed the city in all his years working in Hong Kong, he was inspired to pursue fine art as a photographer and capture the city in his photographs.

Architecture of Density is one of his most famous works, where he uses his pictures to highlight the problem of overpopulation in cities, particularly Hong Kong. The sheer size of the apartment blocks which dwarfs humans, and the sheer density in terms of the number of units in an apartment was what truly delivered the message in my opinion.

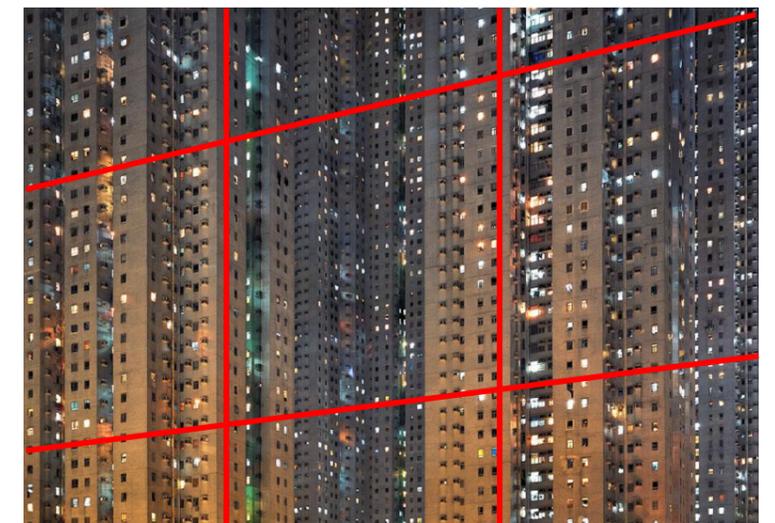
¹² Michael Wolf Photography, 'Architecture of Density', *Michael Wolf Photography* [website], 2009, image, <<http://photomichaelwolf.com/#architecture-of-density-2/13>> accessed 19 September 2017.

¹³ *ibid.*, *Night*, image, <<http://photomichaelwolf.com/#night/3>>

I was particularly captivated by the composition of Wolf's photos. I am particularly attracted to how the elements in his photographs were very well aligned with the gridlines.

I was also especially captivated by his use of repetition as a recurring theme in his photos.

Another theme that I felt was very prominent was the windows elements in his photos. Photographing the apartments, particularly the windows, creates a sense of voyeurism, almost as if we were peering into the lives of the inhabitants of Hong Kong



black & white photography

During a trip to Paris, I noticed that after 9, the city was noticeably less lively, and there was no nightlife around. I found this to be an interesting subject to capture in photos and also as a means to hone my photography skills.

I was influenced by Michael Wolf's close up shots in *Architecture of Density* and *Night*, and incorporating black and white photography. I was particularly intrigued by his photography style. The dark, soulless windows would illustrate the lack of life in the city at night, which would be complemented by the black and white colour scheme.

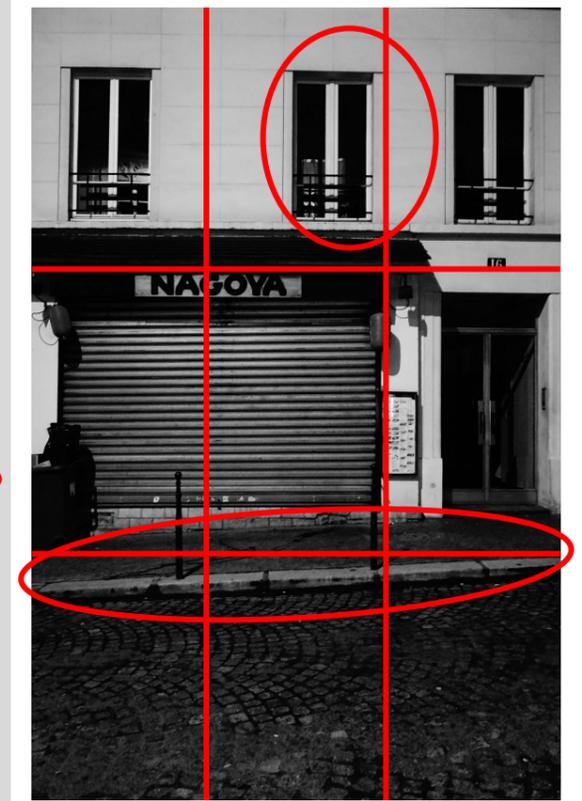


I practiced by photographing the Arc de Triomphe. Through my practice, I learned that black and white Photography was difficult to carry out at night, particularly due to the lack of contrast. Hence, I used a high exposure to achieve a higher. Unfortunately, this resulted in most of my shots being blurry as I did not have a tripod to stabilise the camera.

After mastering exposure, I moved on to taking photos for my series. Many of the pictures were still blurry. Unfortunately, this issue could not be resolved without using a tripod.

One recurring problem was my poor composition. In most of my photos, the composition of the elements of the shot would be unsatisfactory. Much of this could be due to a lack of experience with handling a DSLR camera.

As can be seen here, the elements in my photos tend to be misaligned to the gridlines, or cropped out of the frame.



After much trial and error, I finally produced a photo that I felt was satisfactory (left). Personally, I believe the reason that this photo is more aesthetically pleasing than the others is that it has a prominent subject (the lamp post) compared to the other pictures.

The dim light of the lamp post further contributes to the sense of lifelessness in the city which I wanted to achieve. The vignette effect produced by the low light also creates a sense of voyeurism, almost as if we are peering into the lives of others through the windows

I am very satisfied with the composition of this particular shot. Achieving it was incredibly difficult. I had to climb over a balcony to achieve a top-down view of the shophouses.

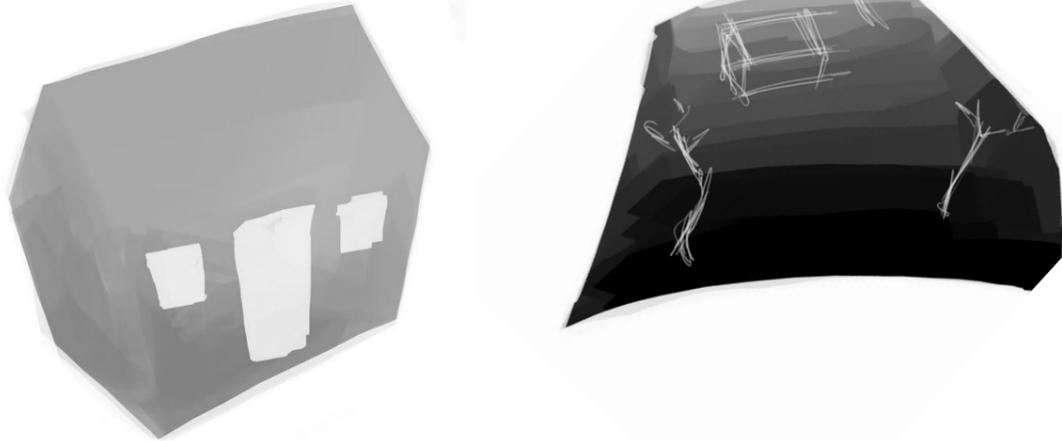
I may try to take similar pictures from other countries or areas to create a series.



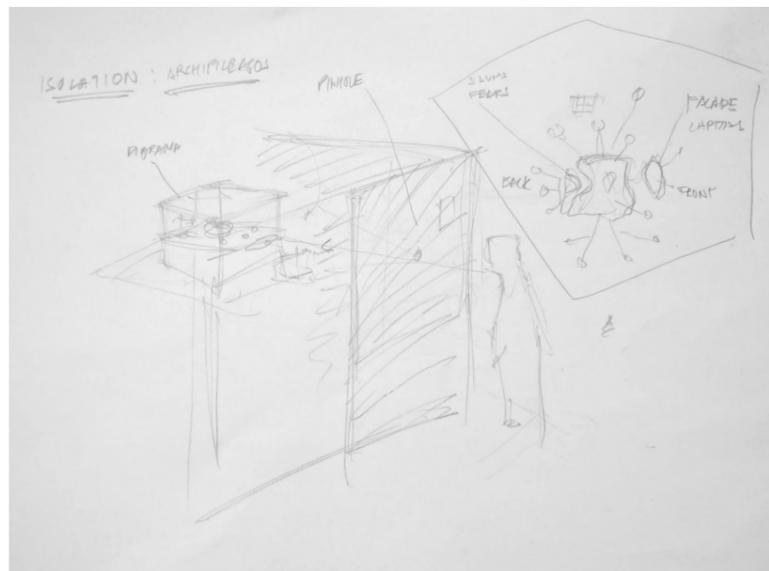
Isolation: planning

After exploring Michael Wolf's work, I was pondered about the nature of apartments. While they are incredibly dense and offer little privacy, their cramped nature isolates inhabitants from the world around.

Thus, I began to explore how to interpret this state of mental isolation in my work. At first, I tried to simply emulate Michael Wolf by sketching apartment blocks. I felt that while this clearly paid homage to Wolf, it did not capture the mental state of being isolated.

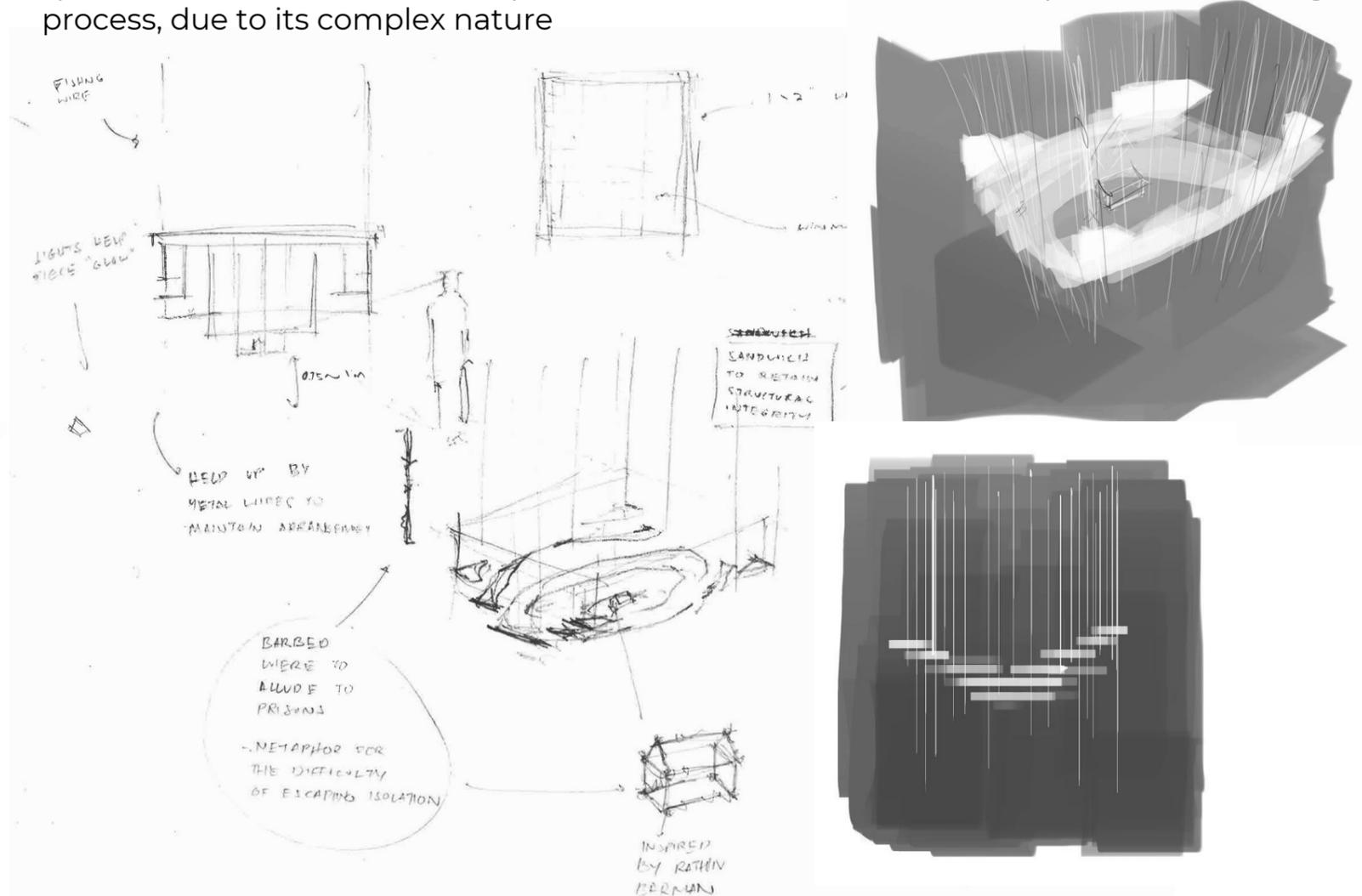


After much experimentation, I found additional inspiration from my previous work, Depression. In Depression, I pictured depression as a little hut which was atop a floating plane, surrounded by darkness. I used this concept and carried it further. I added mountains/hills on the side of the plane to depict the mental barrier that was isolation.

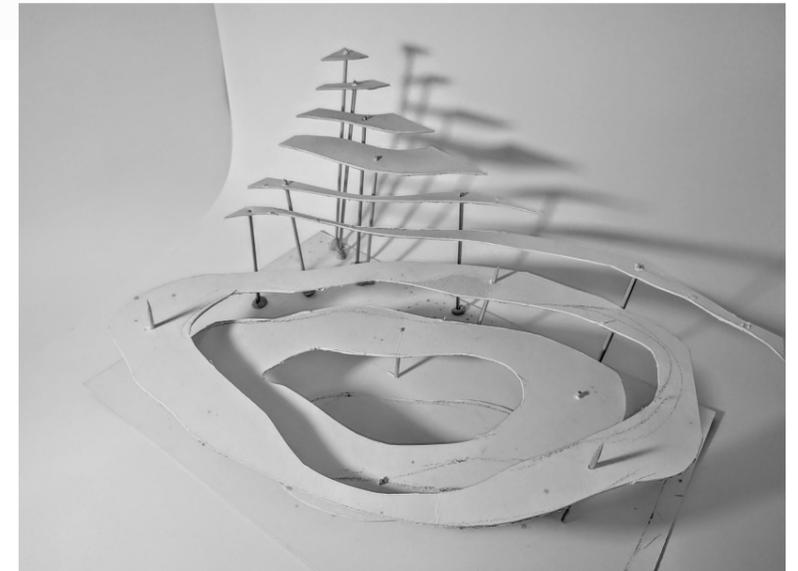


Still not content, I wanted to interpret it in a three dimensional form. I wanted to carry over the same design elements in Depression into reality, namely the feeling of floating and being suspended to further symbolise the state of mind that was isolation. In addition, I would literally be depicting the mental, through the physical.

To create such a piece, I had to create a more detailed plan, along with possible specifications for the finished piece. I would also have to make plans the building process, due to its complex nature



Before moving on to the actual piece, I made a quick mock up, using scraps of card and wooden skewers from the Design and Technology lab. Through this mock up, I learned that the most efficient number of strings to hold the planes in place was in between 3-4. This would result in fewer mistakes when drilling holes in the actual acrylic glass, which can break, if I make a mistake



Isolation: process

Isolation is the piece with which I have had the most trouble with, by far. This is possibly due to the fact that I had not done any form of three-dimensional artworks before, let alone suspended artworks; resulting in insufficient planning.

The centerpiece of the artwork, the house, went through a lot of design changes. Initially, I wanted the house to be barbed, symbolising the mind as a prison. This proved incredibly difficult to create. I eventually settled on simple bars, which are able to represent the same concept, while being friendlier to work with.

I achieved this simple design by cutting a strip of wire mesh and bending it into a barn-shaped prism.

The process for creating the floating basin was just as difficult. Since I wanted it to appear as if it were a floating, intangible object, I used acrylic glass. To cut it into the desired pieces, I had to create a .dxf file using Adobe Illustrator and cut it using a laser cutter. To polish it, I then used brasso.

I had to measure exactly where the holes on the planes should be drilled, such that they would be perfectly aligned from the wire mesh that they would be hung on. Tying the pieces to the wire mesh with fishing wire was where problems started to show.

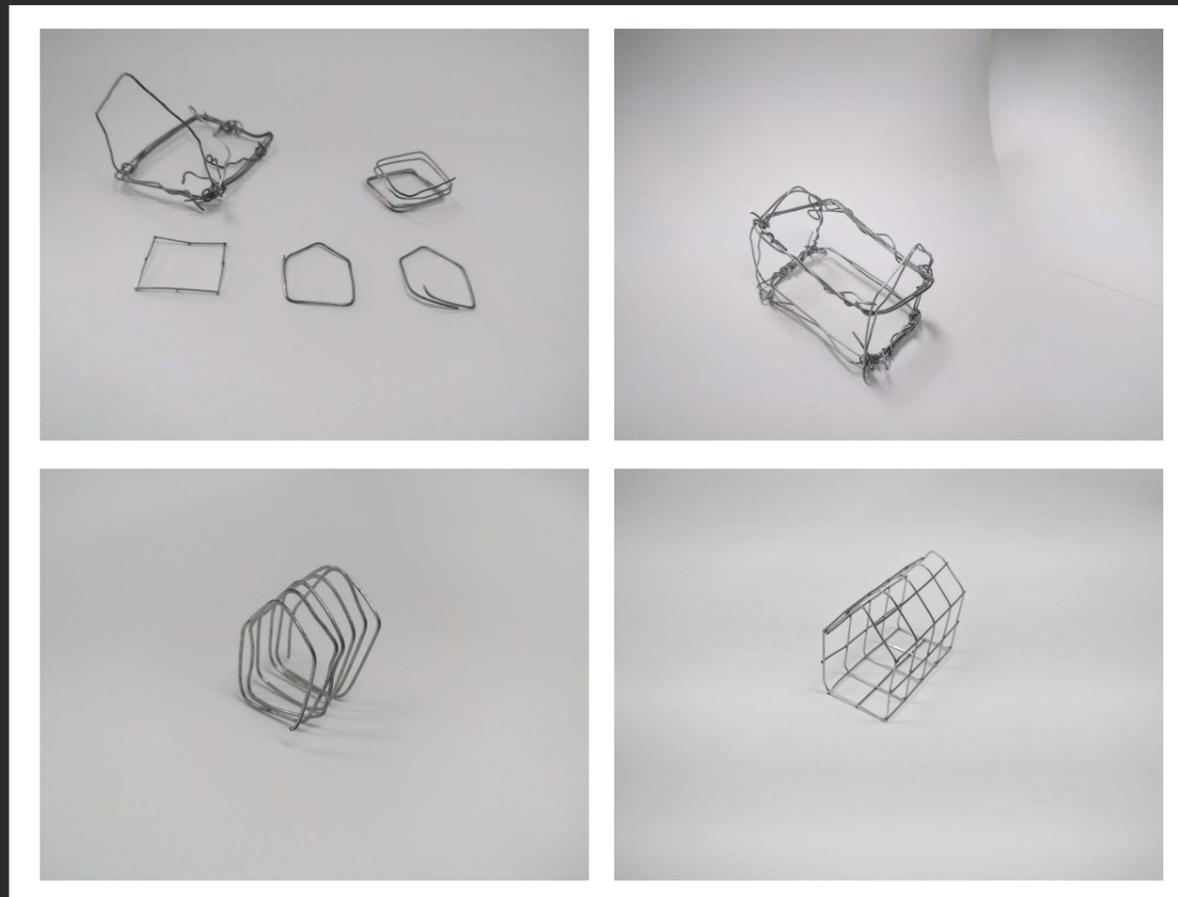
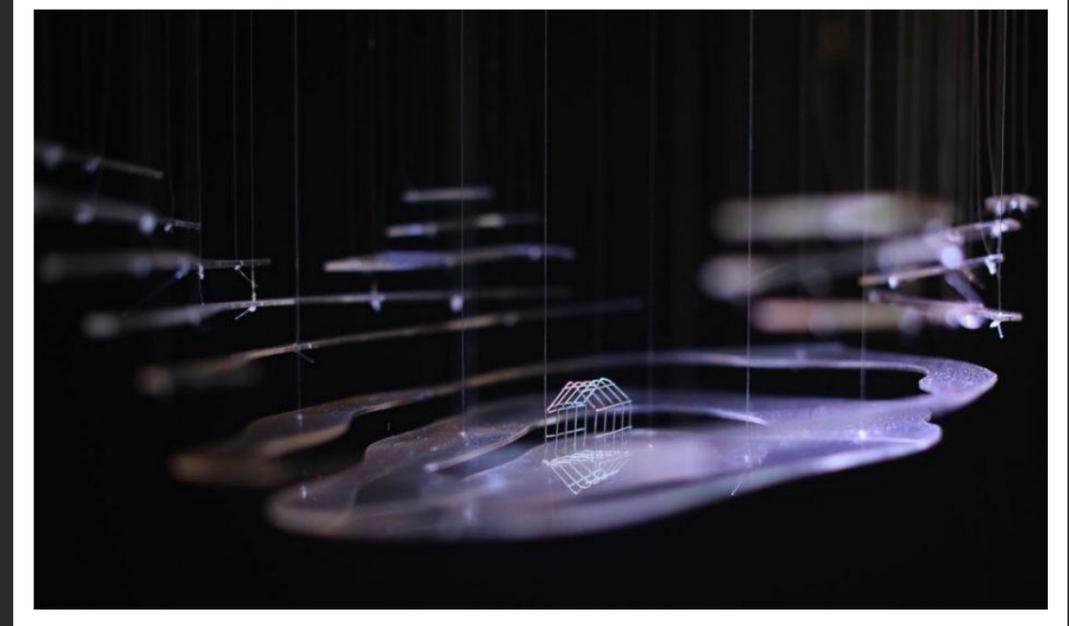
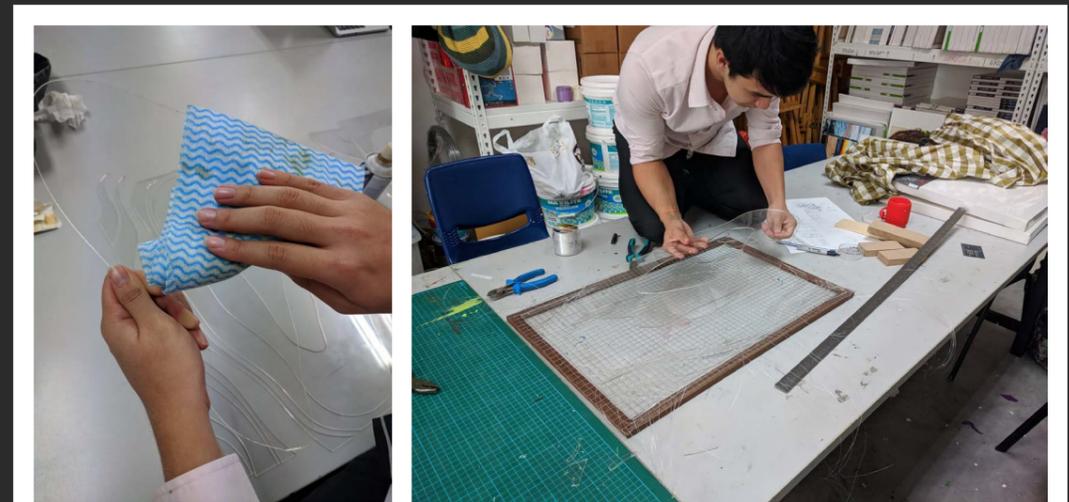
Firstly, I tie all the ends of the wires on the wire mesh, and pass them through the holes of the acrylic glass. Then, I have to make precise measurements as to how long the wires on each level of glass should be.

I then knot the wires on the other end, after marking the measurements.

This process was extremely time consuming, as I had to ensure that the length of the wires were precise to keep the planes parallel to one another.

I had to repeat the entire process of tying strings several times, as they would often tangle.

Once the entire sculpture is done, I simply hang it with a black background, and use a spotlight to illuminate it.

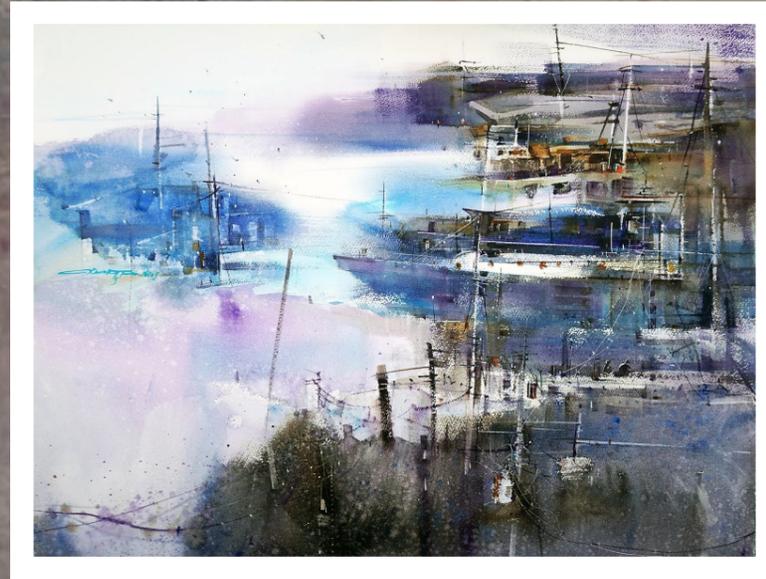


Experimentation of house design

watercolour experimentation

On a trip to Artsfest 2017, I was mesmerised by Tan Suz Chiang's work. His work is a form of watercolour Abstract Expressionism,

I was captivated by his works, *25 Life*, *Change #15*, and *Destination #3* in particular. I found that while at first glance, they appear to be nothing more than smears of watercolour paints; upon close inspection, they somehow manage to capture the scenery and form of the subjects in great detail. This is especially observable in *Destination #3*, which captures the scenery of a harbour waterfront whilst invoking feelings of calmness, serenity, and melancholy.

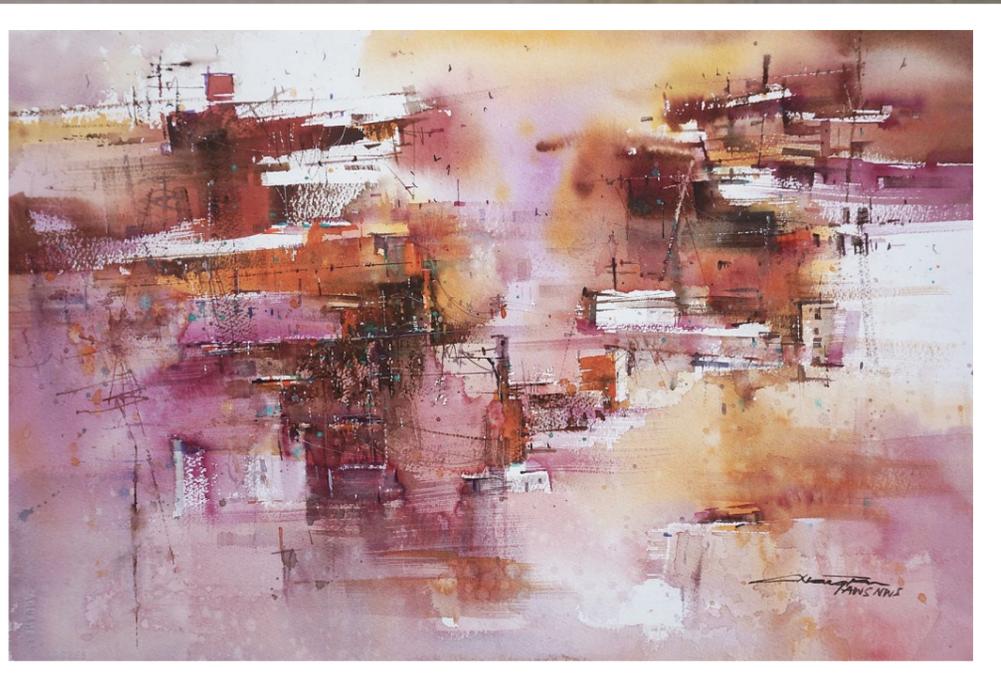


Destination #3 (2016),
Watercolour,
56 x 76cm, Tan Suz Chiang¹⁴

Intrigued, I approached the artist who was exhibiting to enquire about his technique. He said that he uses a palette knife to smear paint on wet watercolour paper, paints over them with water, and then adds detail to the scenery.

He also adds that he uses his imagination to visualise the scene which he paints.

Change #15 (2016),
Watercolour,
38 x 56cm, Tan Suz Chiang¹⁵



Process of replicating Tan Suz Chiang's work

After the exhibition, I attempt to replicate Tan Suz Chiang's work. Whilst I adhered to his steps, I lacked the skills to blend the colours as seamlessly as him. My details were also not as refined as his. With hindsight, I could attempt to replicate his work again with a higher water to paint ratio to achieve the wet on wet look which is very prominent in Tan Suz Chiang's work.

On the whole, I am still unsatisfied with the work that I have produced while replicating his method.

¹⁴Tan Suz Chiang' *The Arts Fest* [website],n.d., image <<https://www.theartsfest.com/tan-suz-chiang>>, accessed 16 March 2017

¹⁵Ibid.

HEADACHE

A Study of and Homage to:

Jackson Pollock



I was having a terrible headache due to intense studying the night before (for my 10Gs). During my breaktime, I checked upon an article detailing how Jackson Pollock's famous drip paintings from 1938 to 1942 coincided with him dealing with alcohol's "Maybe those drip paintings were a way for him to deal with all those hangovers," I chuckled as the thought crossed my mind.

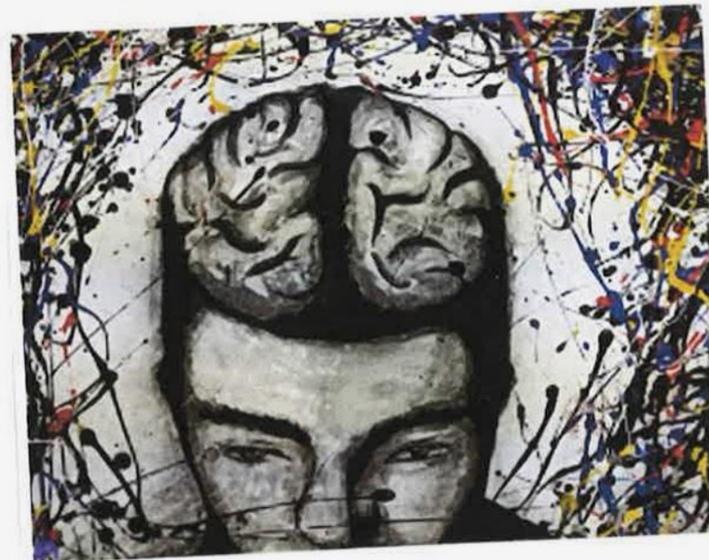
And that was how I was inspired to simply paint this piece to keep my mind off the throbbing headache I was having.

I was inspired by Jackson Pollock's drip paintings because they all have a certain sense of deliberation and frustration to them, particularly his later works in the 1950s which were darker and more chaotic.



Before I even began, I knew that I wanted the focal point of my artwork to be a giant brain, bulging out of a person's head, in the centre of the canvas.

I made a sketch using pictures of my friend from an upwards angle to exaggerate the size of the brain, as well as pictures of actual brains from the internet



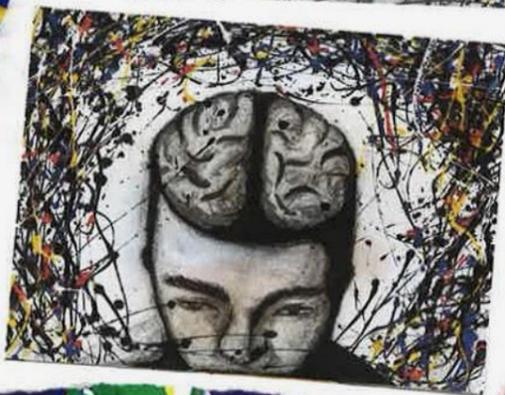
In my artwork, "Headache", I used the image of a brain bulging out from a human skull/head to convey the feeling of intense pain one feels during while experiencing a headache.

I also used Drip Painting - a form of action painting made famous by Jackson Pollock to emphasize the constant blur or buzz that surrounds a person experiencing a headache. It was also meant as a means for me to vent my frustration and take my mind off the pain.

The mixture of colours that I used are symbols of all the thoughts racing through one's mind when not able to concentrate.

After the rough sketch, I made a drip painting around the head, using mainly darker colours such as black, brown, and purple. To add contrast as well as complement the darker colours, I used some lighter colours as well, such as orange and yellow.

Once the paint was dry, I analysed the brain and head using charcoal and black paint. A problem I noticed with the charcoal was that it could be easily wiped off. I will have to add finishing touches just before displaying.



city lights: planning & process



I am particularly inspired by Michael Wolf's compositions in his series *Architecture of Density*, and continuously seek to incorporate them in my pieces.

One of my abandoned projects was to paint a scene of a city at night. I was not satisfied with its initial composition and colour scheme (which at the time was to be monochrome)

I think that it will be interesting to recycle this idea, but incorporate Michael Wolf's compositions

I plan to use Michael Wolf's composition in his photo _ from his series *Architecture of Density* as a guideline and incorporate the vibrant colour which he captured in _ from his series *Night*. While the scene of a city at night will remain in my piece, I will instead continue the theme of visualising the mental from my previous pieces.

Instead of documenting the depressing problem of overpopulation in cities, I will depict the hope and opportunity which people from rural areas, including myself, tend to associate cities with. This will be reflected in the complementary colour scheme of yellow and purple.



Firstly, I make paint the base of the painting, a gradient of yellow to dark purple. I then darken the sides, to show the shadows that will be cast by the buildings that are not perpendicular to the viewer.

Once the paint dries, I roughly sketch the details of the building

After that, I go over most of the lines using charcoal to darken them. I also add details such as drying poles.

I then add the yellow and white glow of the windows.

I still feel that my painting lacks depth, and detail, as it is difficult to tell that it is an apartment block. I will try to add more depth by adding more shadows and details to make the buildings appear lived in, such as satellite dishes and perhaps hanging clothes.

Adding a darker layer of paint appears to give my painting more tone, further adding depth to the final piece. The details seem to have helped a lot as well.

However, I feel that I could have taken a more abstract approach, using lines to represent the details instead of explicitly showing them, akin to how our eyes perceive these minute details.

inking process

Throughout my travels, I make observational drawings on tiny cards wherever I go. I use small, hand-cut cards since they are easy to carry around. As for the drawings, I choose to work solely with a standard 0.3 technical pen, a brush pen, and a water-based grey marker. I keep equipments to a minimum for ease of travel.

Over the years, I have noted many similarities and differences in the architectural styles of both western and eastern traditional architecture. Western architecture tends to conform to specific styles, such as gothic, georgian, or anglo saxon. Eastern architecture on the other hand, tends not to have set styles, particularly due to the assimilation of british and portuguese colonial architecture during the 50s.



I start by making a rough guidelines as to where the buildings are located. Since I am working entirely in pen, I am unable to resort to traditional perspective lines. In addition to that, buildings tend not to be laid out in a grid structure in real life, especially in eastern countries where the topography is mountainous and the soil is largely made of silt, such as my home country of Malaysia. As such, I resort to intuition.



I then start to draw the basic structure of the buildings. I do this by using the most basic of shapes, such as triangles, circles, and rectangles or squares.



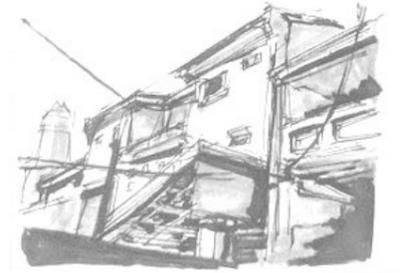
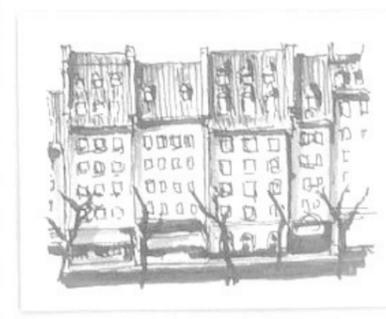
After creating a basic structure, I start to add the finer details in buildings, This part is particularly challenging for me, since I tend to spend too much time observing the buildings to ensure that I capture the likeness of the scene as much as possible.



I then use my brush pen to fill in darker shadows of the scene. Sometimes, I choose to add shadows when they are not present to further enhance the look and feel of the scene. I also use this technique to cover up any potential mistakes if the scene allows for it.



To complete my drawing, I then add lighter shadows using the grey marker. I also use this to give the scene more tone, and to separate the foreground from the background, or to highlight the subject of the scene as I have done here.



traveling: process



With the vast number of sketches I have, I am inspired to showcase them in an art piece - not as a series, but as an individual piece.

I pondered about presenting them in a number of different ways - scattered on the ground, arranged on a board (pictured above) hung from the ceiling as an interactive piece, or even connected by red string.

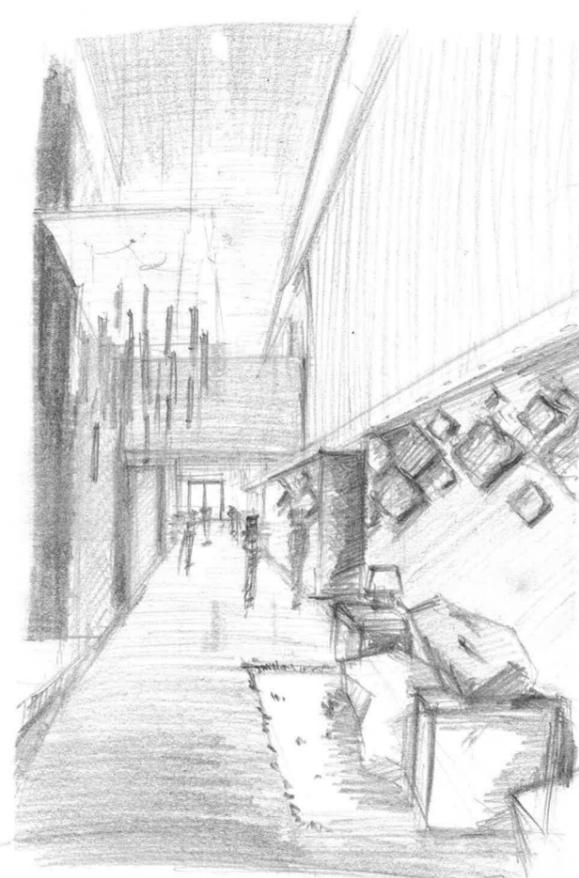
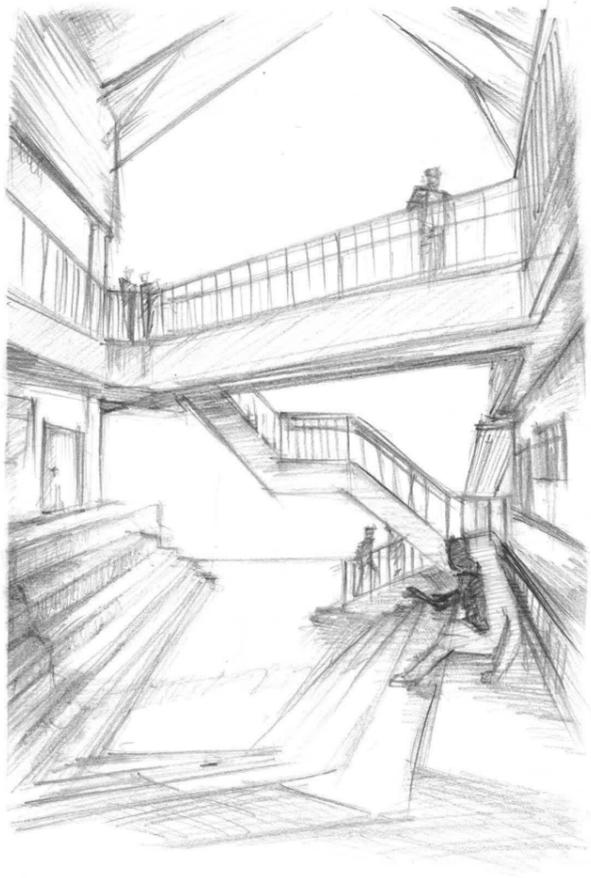
I ended up presenting them on a piece of mounting board. While the order may seem completely random, there is a rationale behind the arrangement.

As an international student from Malaysia, I am constantly torn between two worlds; West and East. Throughout my travels around the world, I make observational sketches on tiny cards. By comparing the similarities and differences of both worlds, I also compare the different attitudes expected of me from each one. Eventually, both worlds must meet midway and collide, resulting in who I am today.

As such, I arrange the pieces by having Eastern architecture on one corner, and western, the other. The two worlds meld together in the middle, symbolising my situation.

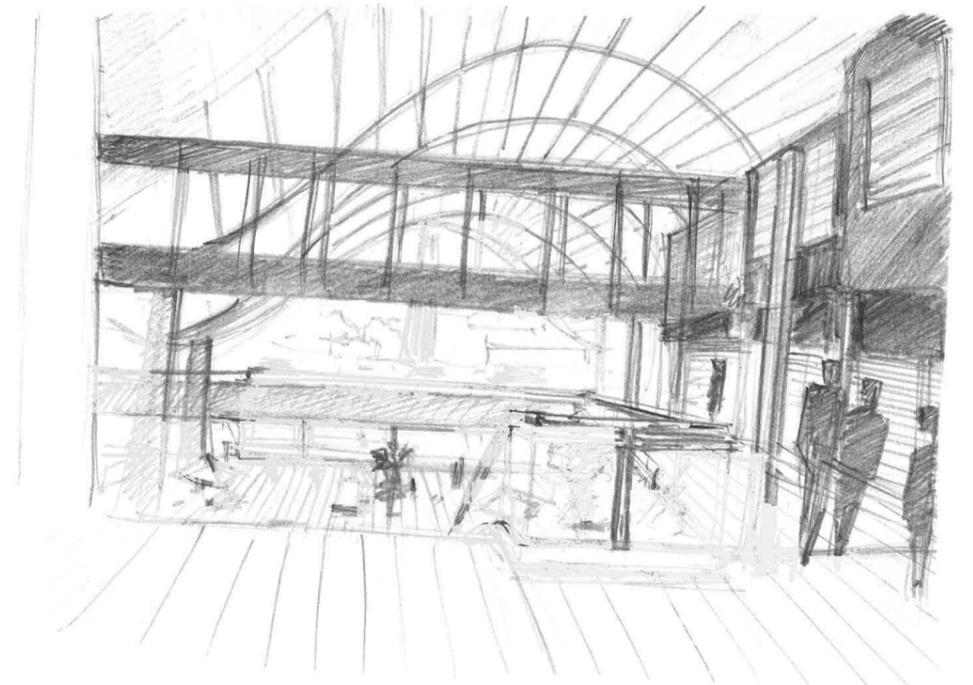
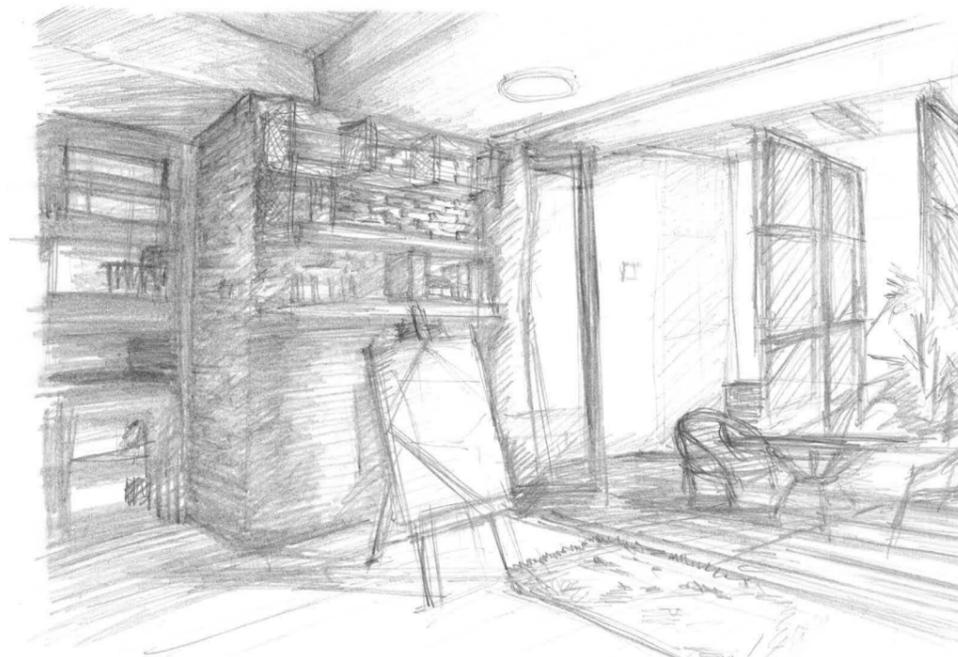


observational sketches



To further improve my sketches, I decided to make full size observational sketches, particularly of more complicated spaces. I also decided to use a larger size of paper (A4). In addition to that, I practise using pencils, since I am not particularly good at shading complex backgrounds without the help of pens.

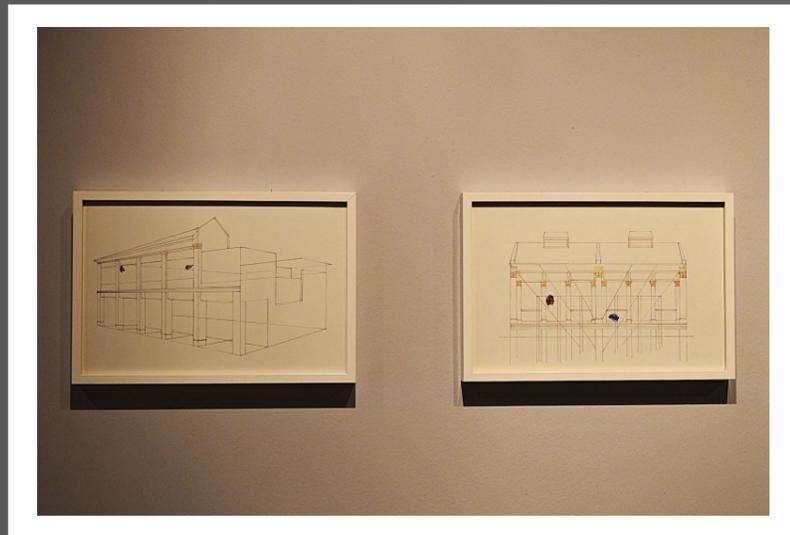
For such spaces, I can not simply use perspective lines, and hence, I train my intuition as an artist. I find that I have the most problems with open spaces, in which the architecture is not uniform, or where the details are considerably more complex.



depression: planning & process

Planning

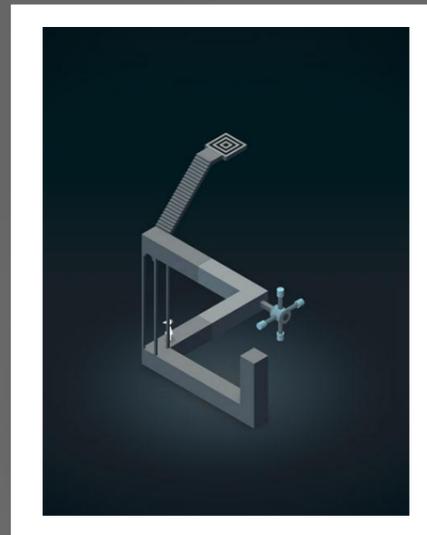
After a class trip to the 2016 Singapore Biennale, I was inspired by Rathin Barman's exhibition - *Home, and a Home*. I was fascinated by his idea of associating a shop house with the abstract idea of broken hopes and dreams of migrant workers, which led to me using buildings to visualise psychological/emotional disorders.



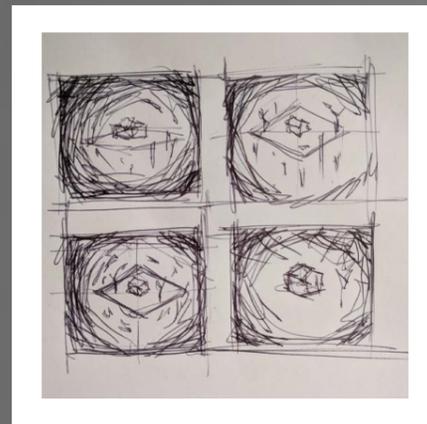
Home, and a Home, Ruat Etchings (2016) - Rathin Barman¹⁹

I consulted a friend suffering from depression, who stated that "...depression is like living in a small cozy house, but you're all alone in the middle of nowhere..." He also listed black as a colour he strongly associates with depression.

Visually, I was particularly inspired by the isometric designs of the hit puzzle game, Monument Valley



A level from Monument Valley²⁰



Process

Using a ruler and a protractor, I sketch out the design on the canvas in an isometric fashion, (using grids of equilateral triangles)

I then paint in the backgrounds, avoiding my subject. I then paint the subject, making sure that the lines are straight using masking tape.

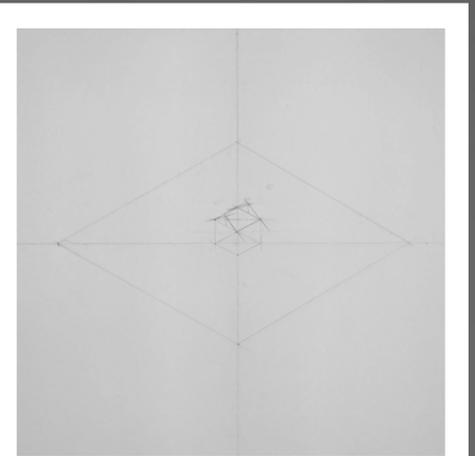
I vary the shades of grey in order to show that the light source is from the front left of the object.

Unfortunately, the masking tape was not very accurate as it stretched and buckled when in contact to excess water. I had to repaint multiple parts, especially focusing on the house on the plane.

The minimal aesthetic, only accentuated the flaws of the lines.

Due to the extensive repaints over the white areas, I had to change the source of the light from the front left to the back of the object to ease the painting process.

To give the light a more ethereal look, I added hints of blue and made the light appear to be shifting through the use of multiple strokes.



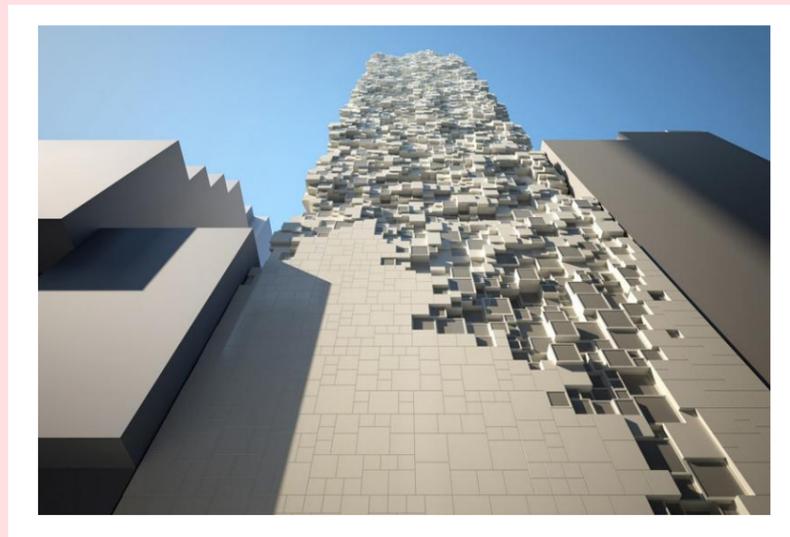
¹⁹ K. Tan, 'Discovering The Atlas at The Singapore Biennale', *Odetoart* [blog], 23 February 2017, para. 13 image <<http://www.odetoart.com/blog.php?p=52.Discovering%20The%20Atlas%20at%20The%20Singapore%20Biennale>> accessed 19 September 2017.

²⁰ Screenshot from Monument Valley

anxiety: planning and process

Planning

Like Depression, the concept for Anxiety was also conceived at the 2016 Singapore Biennale. While the overall aesthetic of the piece was still inspired by the game Monument Valley, I also drew inspirations from additional sources such as Thomas Heatherwick's Sheung Wan Hotel concept, as well as Zaha Hadid's explosive paintings.



Sheung Wan Hotel Concept,
Thomas Heatherwick²¹



Confetti - the Peak (1982-1983), Zaha
Hadid²²

Unlike Depression, I have quite a few friends who suffer from mild to serious anxiety. With emotions being a very subjective topic, there were, as expected, differences in descriptions. Some described an anxiety attack as cold, and blinding, as they are frozen with fear; others described it as hot but dark, with reference to the uneasiness experienced. Another mentioned the feeling of one's confidence crumbling to the ground.

As such, I mixed and matched from the information provided in an attempt to represent all their experiences equally.



Process

With contrasting information, I had to make trials of the design and sent it to my friends for reviews. I eventually settled on a shifting cube to represent the uneasiness one makes when making a decision with anxiety

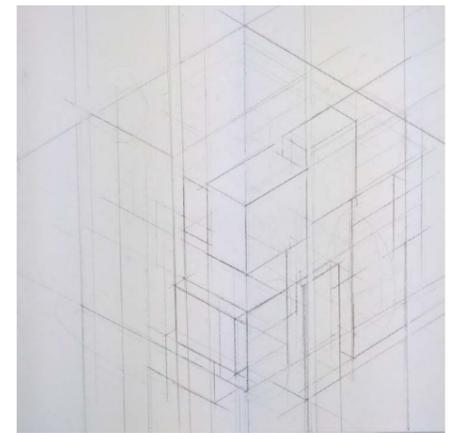
I had already transferred the design onto the canvas when one of my friends recommended that the cube be drawn crumbling.

I used the same process as Depression. However, I forgot to take into account that there were too many lines, and that using masking tape would take a longer time - I did not paint the background before transferring the final design onto the canvas.

I made the top darker, and gave the background a gradient towards white - another method of making it seem as if the object were floating.

I envisioned the lightsource from the bottom, and hence the shadows on the top of the crumbling cube. I experimented with the placement of the falling "blocks" I thought of using flat strokes to portray them in a similar manner to Zaha Hadid's Confetti.

I changed the falling "blocks" and gave them more dimension. The flat brush strokes did convey the sense falling as I had hoped. On hindsight, it would have been more appropriate to use an upwards brush stroke which would have given the impression of a downwards motion.



²¹A. Chin, 'thomas heatherwick: sheung wan hotel, hong kong', *Designboom* [website], 1 August 2012, image, <<https://www.designboom.com/architecture/thomas-heatherwick-sheung-wan-hotel-hong-kong/>>

²²Zaha Hadid Architects, 'The Peak Leisure Club, Confetti', *Zaha Hadid Architects* [website], n.d. image <<http://www.zaha-hadid.com/architecture/the-peak-leisure-club/>> accessed 20 September 2017.