# Skills and Techniques: Process: Tryptic

Photograph Subjects

Photograph the subjects you will be painting. Place the subject in front of a clear background; if you are the subject, position your camera on a tripod and use a self timer. For outdoor subjects, position yourself directly in front of the subject to avoid any distortion. Try to photograph the subject in front of a relatively clear background. Once the shots are taken, crop the photos and increase the sharpness of the photos.
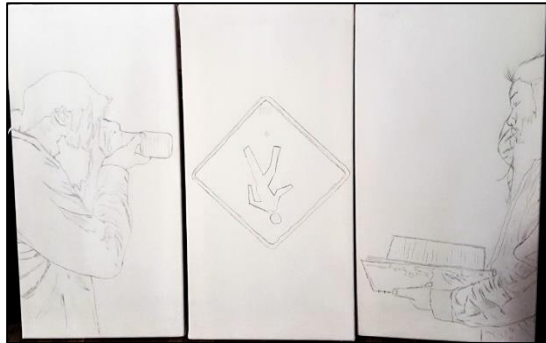
Canvas Preparation

Stretch three 60.96 cm by 30.48 cm canvases. Then, using a 1.5 inch (38.1 mm) brush, apply an even coat of white gesso to the canvas. Apply the gesso in one direction to ensure a smooth painting surface and allow the canvases to dry.

Transferring Images

Project your images onto the three canvas and outline the subjects by tracing the projections with a pencil. Be sure to trace highlights and shadows.

Painting

Paint the canvases in chronological order. This allows you to connect the canvases to form a coherent story. Start by mixing a skin tone of red, burnt umber, yellow, and white. Add copious amounts of water to the skin tone. Then, using a size 3/4 inch flat brush, apply the hue to the face and hand. Vary the intensity of the color by using differing amounts of water on the brush. Refer to the photographs to determine how light affects the subjects. Next, mix a blue - green hue for the shirt. Once again, vary the intensity of the color to accentuate the shadows and wrinkles of the fabric. With a size 8 flat brush, paint the bearded areas with cool colors using quick flicking strokes. With the same brush and technique, paint the hair in red and orange hues. Then, paint the background blue with the 3/4 inch flat brush. The blue hue should be watered down substantially to achieve a light wash. Be sure to vary the intensity of the background color by applying differing amounts of coats to different areas.

For the next canvas, mix an orange and yellow hue with water. Using a 3/4 inch flat brush, apply the hue to the crosswalk sign with even layers of consistent intensity. Paint the walking figure with two hues, a dark green and dark blue. Then, create a thick outline of the sign in a dark blue - green hue. Add copious amounts of water to this color and allow the brushes of the 3/4 inch flat brush to soak up the paint. Then, dab the brush into the top border of the sign. Allow the paint to naturally fall down the canvas. Once the paint has dried, paint the background with the same blue used in the background of the first canvas. Start with this hue on the left side of the canvas and stop at roughly halfway through the canvas. Using a red hue, paint the right side of the canvas until it is thoroughly covered. In the middle of the canvas, where the two hues meet, use the 3/4 inch flat brush to blend the two colors to form a violet hue. Use long dramatic horizontal brush strokes for a visibly rough texture.
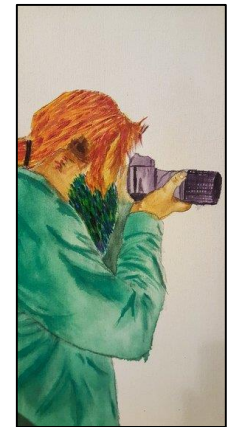
For the final canvas, mix a dark blue-green hue and dilute it with copious amounts of water. Paint the shirt with the same technique used in the first canvas and vary the intensity of the hue to create dramatic shadows. Then, mix a skin tone of burnt umber, yellow, and white and dilute it with water. Apply the paint with a 3/4 inch brush to the necessary areas and make sure that the shadows and highlights contrast. The paint should also leave a rough texture to the skin to imply wrinkles and age. With a variety of gray and white hues, paint the hair using long flicking brushstrokes. The hair on the head should curve upward while the facial hair can be represented in all directions. Once the hair is painted, apply paint to the notebook. Finish the canvas by painting the background with the same red hue used in the middle canvas. Ensure that brushstrokes are visible on the background of the canvas.

Experimentation

When painting, experiment with a variety of brushstrokes. For the most part, I used a ¾ inch brush exclusively to paint. In some cases, I used a size 8 brush for finer details but for a majority of the piece, I aimed to use a larger brush. Combined with a quick, flicking stroke, the brush left a rough and textured look that allowed my intent to translate onto the canvases. In addition to brushstrokes, I experimented with the intensity of colors. By diluting acrylic paint with varying amounts of water, the opacity and intensity of the paint changes. Furthermore, by applying paint in separate layers, I managed to achieve contrasting backgrounds with singular colors. These two methods enabled me to emulate the work of Mark Rothko and his Color Field pieces. Furthermore, the varying opacities of the paint combined with the layering technique allowed me to add more depth to shadows and highlights. By diluting the paint with water, the medium became increasingly runny and easier to manipulate. This freed my creativity and helped materialize my ideas.
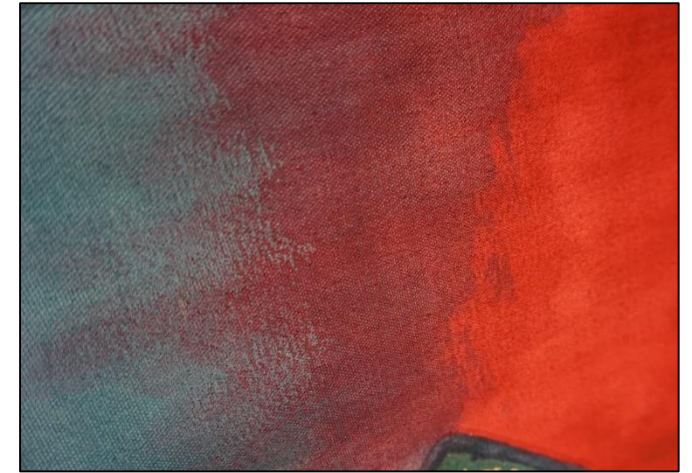
"Soliloquy" is a piece rooted in expression therefore, the medium had to possess a certain aesthetic that matched my intent for the piece. In many ways, my experimentation took place on a philosophical level. I wanted to consider the medium by which the piece was made as a cornerstone of its identity. I then wanted to contradict the medium to see how the materials used to create a piece affect its metaphors and overall meaning. By contradiction of the medium, I am referring to the translucent nature of the acrylic paint I used. Acrylic paint is often used as a thick and opaque medium yet my piece looks almost as if it was made with watercolor paint. I learned that the medium that a piece is created with greatly affects not only the physical appearance of the piece but the metaphysical meaning of the piece as well.
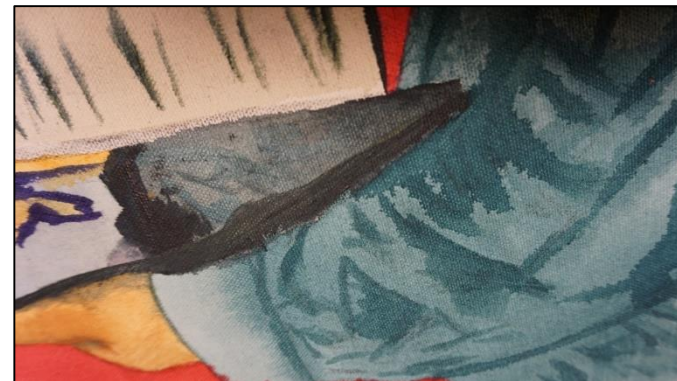
Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration

Rothko, Mark . Untitled. Digital image. WikiArt. WikiArt, n.d. Web. 20 Jan. 2017.

The piece "Soliloquy" draws inspiration from the work of Mark Rothko and the art movement Expressionism. Considered to be one of the originators of Color Field painting, Mark Rothko's work focused on pure abstraction free from traditional forms and figures. His most iconic works feature rectangular blocks of color on top of a field of color. Rothko considered his work to be filled with ideas and depth. Furthermore, his work was a response to a world that he believed limited the artists' ability to express themselves. Rothko believed that artists should be able to express their ideas in any manner they desired. Therefore, his Color Field pieces are a celebration of the artist's freedom of expression and creative liberty. I aimed to capture a similar sense of abstraction in the background of my piece. In "Soliloquy", the left and right canvases show two colors converging into a third in the middle canvas. While my piece does not feature hovering rectangular blocks of color like Rothko's work, it does explore the power of color as a means of expression. Additionally, the background of my piece possesses a similar inconsistent intensity as Rothko's Color Field paintings. "Soliloquy" was intended to be my depiction of myself and my story. But my representation of myself was far from realistic.

"Soliloquy"
91.44x60.96cm
Acrylic on Canvas
January, 2017

I adopted the ideals of Expressionism that argued art came from the emotions and thoughts of the artist. Expressionists refused to represent things as they appeared to the eye. Instead, they depicted things as they felt they were. As shown in James Ensor's "Death and the Masks" this was often achieved through vivid colors, prominent brushstrokes, and exaggeration. My piece features some of these elements such as visible brushstrokes and vibrant hues. As such, "Soliloquy" successfully emulates Expressionism. The piece is rooted in expression and the scenes depicted are my perceptions inspired purely by emotion. I rejected reality in pursuit of an introspective truth and translated it on the canvases. My intent and technique are clearly inspired by the Expressionist movement.

The Art Story Foundation. "Expressionism Movement, Artists and Major Works." The Art Story. The Art Story Foundation , n.d. Web. 26 Jan. 2017. <http://www.theartstory.org/movement-expressionism.htm>.
The Art Story Foundation. "Mark Rothko Biography, Art, and Analysis of Works." The Art Story. The Art Story Foundation, n.d. Web. 26 Jan. 2017. <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-rothko-mark.htm>.
Wilkin, Karen, and Carl Belz. Color as field: American painting, 1950-1975. New York: American Federation of Arts, 2007. Print.

Ensor, James. Death And The Masks. Digital image. WikiArt. WikiArt, n.d. Web. 19 Jan. 2017. .

Reviewing, Refining, and Reflecting
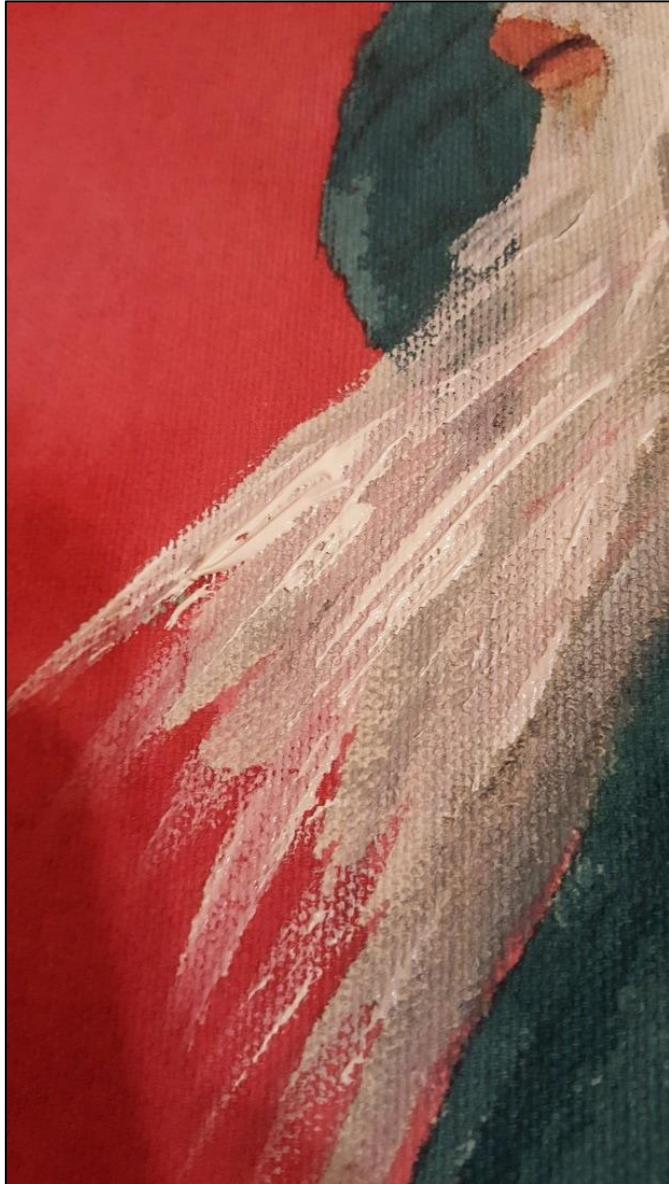
Through the completion of this piece, I have refined my painting skills, developed new ways to utilize acrylic paint, and gained a better understanding of the importance of color. Prior to this piece, my art regarded color as an arbitrary element used solely for aesthetics. But after analyzing the work of Mark Rothko and emulating the style of Expressionists, I've come to understand that color is an abstract form that possesses its own meaning. Initially, I struggled with seeing color in this way. I was hesitant to move my paintbrush because I was too focused on representing my reflection instead of my perception of myself. I overcame this difficulty by allowing my emotions to dictate my brushstrokes. Instead of thinking, I allowed the irrational parts of me to decide what the piece would become. This is evident in my color palette; I didn't consider what made sense when I painted, rather I translated my emotions into different hues and painted with them. This is why I consider "Soliloquy" a success.


The piece successfully emulates the Expressionist movement by freeing the art from reality in favor of personal truth. In addition, similar to the Expressionists, my brushstrokes are visible and intentional. This aided in the emulation of Mark Rothko's Color Field paintings where his hues were of varying intensity and highly textured. Although Rothko's works and my piece are innately different due to my use of solid figures and his reliance on rectangular patches of color, both of our pieces utilize color as a medium of abstract expression. The background hues of "Soliloquy" tell a story much like Rothko's fields of color. As such, my emulation of Mark Rothko's work is, to a great extent, successful. In regards to areas of improvement, I believe my intent must be more explicit. Even though I wanted the piece to be open to interpretation, I feel as though my intent should be easier to recognize.
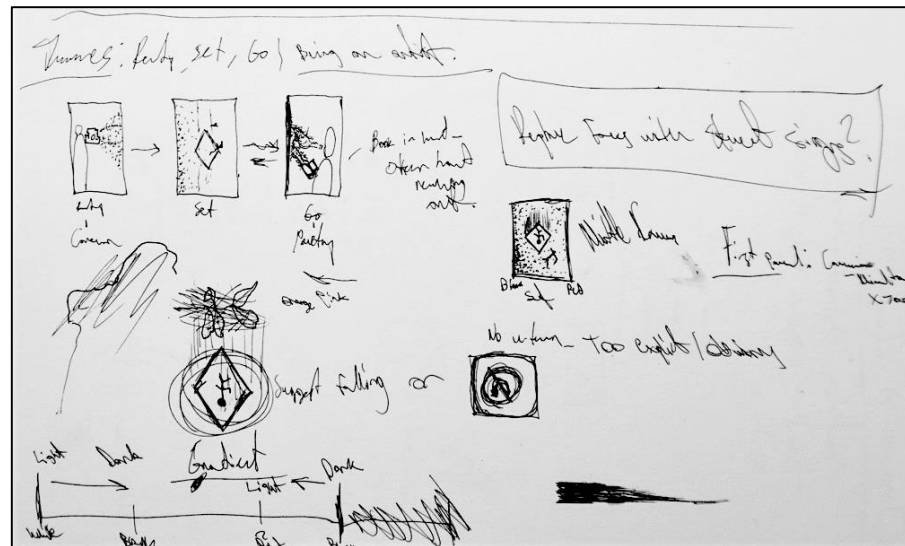
Overall, I am happy with the final piece. I started with a rudimentary sketch combined with an extremely clear desire to create a story incorporating my two passions and I am proud to say that this piece does exactly that. I spent a great deal of time sketching prior to painting to flesh out my ideas and I brought my plans to life as best I could. The backgrounds that appear as gradients fading into one another help direct the narrative of the tryptic; they suggest a unifying juxtaposition which speaks to the conflict within me as a visual artist and a writer.

Communication of Ideas: Meaning: Conceptual Qualities

"Soliloquy" is the exploration of the cause and effect relationship between time and people as well as the effect of the world on the artist. The first canvas is a depiction of me in my current state. It illustrates one of my mediums of expression: photography. The second canvas is a crosswalk sign that, to me, refers to the passing of time and the ever changing reality we live in. The third canvas is a visualization of who I will be, hence the grey hair. It also depicts my other medium of expression: poetry. There are two ways I interpret the piece. The first interpretation is fairly obvious; as time passes, artists look back in retrospect while young artists are enthusiastic about the future. Both artists generally wish they could trade places but time does not allow them such luxuries. So the young artist continues to look forward while the old artist continues to reflect.
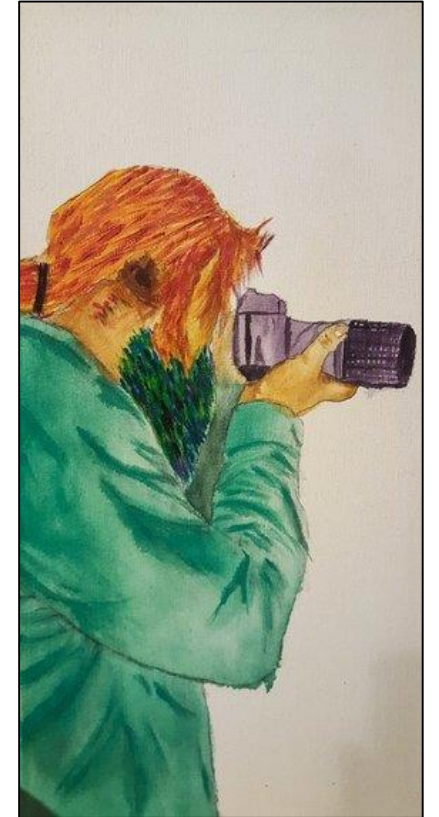
The second interpretation is less obvious than the first; artists have a give and take relationship with the world. The photography enthusiast within me captures the world, thus I take its inspiration. The poet in me is far wiser and gives back inspiration to the world. The crosswalk sign is symbolic of this world and its mundane sources of inspiration. Essentially, the story breaks down to how the environment affects me, how I affect it, and how I am a product of what I see.

Skills and Techniques: Process: Mixed Media
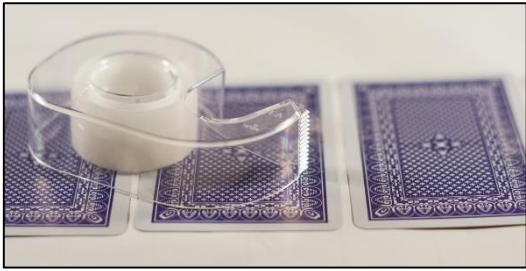
Spray Paint Preparation

Divide the deck of cards into groups of five or six. Lay each pile down on a flat surface with the face of each card facing down. Ensure that the cards are spaced evenly and the top and bottom edges are parallel. Connect the cards together with small pieces of tape. Flip over the cards and ensure that the surfaces are free of debris.

Spray Painting

After the cards are connected and clean, place them face up on pieces of cardboard or styrofoam. Vigorously shake a can of white spray paint for one minute, then apply an even layer of spray paint on each grouping of cards with a horizontal movement of the can. Hold the can ten to twelve inches above the cards when applying the spray paint. Using a similar technique, paint the card box. Allow the first coat to settle for an hour. Apply another coat of spray paint to the cards and turn over the card box and paint it as well. Allow the final coat of paint to dry for twenty four hours.

Card Clean Up

After the spray paint has dried, separate the cards by removing the tape. The cards will have residual paint on the back and edges. Start by putting the cards in uniform pile; use a sharp blade to scrape the edges of the cards. Shuffle the deck to remove paint shavings stuck in between the cards. Once the edges are clean, remove the excess paint on the backs of the cards. Loosen the paint on each individual by rubbing alcohol on the paint with a cotton ball. Gently scrape the paint off with a sharp blade.
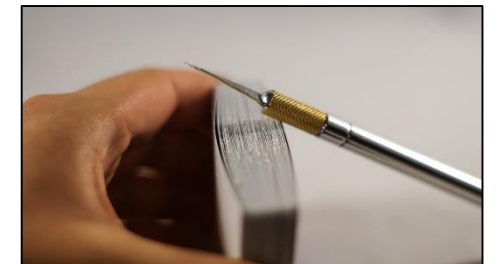
Experimentation

One of my initial ideas was to form a Torii gate with cards and allow it to fall from the deck box. I decided not to move forward with this concept because it lacks meaning to me and it looks odd due to the flatness of the cards. Essentially, the cards lack the necessary dimension to effectively portray the gate.

The idea I will be moving forward with is more simplistic and natural. The cards will simply fall out of the box randomly to better emulate a realistic card position.

Because this piece is highly conceptual, I have gained a better understanding of the importance of subtle details such as the back design of the cards. Each of these three designs could've changed the meaning of the piece to some extent. As my intended meaning is for the audience to think about the meaning of the piece, I chose the more common design. This decision allows my meaning to stay true to conceptual art by limiting unnecessary imagery and emotion.
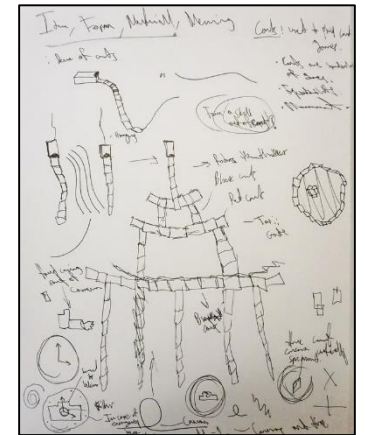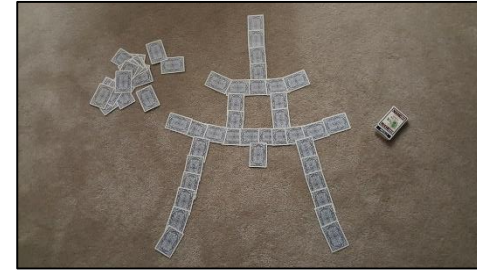
Initially, "Ruminate" was supposed to be a piece where all cards in a deck were glued together in an attempt to contradict the piece with the medium in which it was made. I experimented with gluing the cards together using both super glue and hot glue. The glue warped the cards and left residue on various parts of the piece. I attempted to make the falling of the cards seem natural by allowing the cards to freely fall out of the deck. I thought that this would aid in my emulation of conceptual art. However, I failed to consider that my innate pursuit of aesthetics would be detrimental as it resulted in my rearranging of the cards to include elements and principles of design. I realize now that there is a clear sense of repetition and line in the experimental piece that contradicts my desire to focus on the conceptual side of art. Through experimentation, I've started to realize how difficult it is to create a piece that does not rely on its aesthetic qualities. To reject beauty in exchange for provocation of thought is an extreme challenge, a challenge that this experimental design could not overcome.

Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration

The piece "Ruminate" draws inspiration from the work of Marcel Duchamp and Robert Rauschenberg's "Erased de Kooning Drawing." Marcel Duchamp was a revolutionary artist in both Dadaism and Conceptual art. His readymades challenged the purpose of art and the artist's role in the creation of art. Duchamp's work was built on a foundation of ideas rather than aesthetics; he often questioned with his work what art is. For example, with his readymade "Fountain" he challenged traditional notions of what art could be. I emulated this desire to question art with the piece "Ruminate." I drew from Duchamp's focus on concept over aesthetic by using readymade materials and portraying them in a manner that draws attention to the idea rather than the beauty of the piece. My goal, much like Duchamp, was to ask the audience a question. As such, "Ruminate" possesses no concrete meaning.

Duchamp, Marcel. Fountain (1917). Digital image. WikiArt. WikiArt, n.d. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. .

"Ruminate"
Playing Cards,
Spray Paint
March, 2017

Rauschenberg, Robert. Erased de Kooning Drawing, 1953. Digital image. SFMOMA. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, n.d. Web. 25 Mar. 2017.

I created the piece much like Robert Rauschenberg created his work, without a definite reason. Rauschenberg wanted the audience to interact with his work by allowing them to determine its meaning and value. Like Duchamp, he questioned art, what it could be, and what the artist's relationship with art was. This can be seen in his piece, "Erased de Kooning Drawing" where, like the title suggests, he erased a drawing given to him by Willem de Kooning. Without the small inscription on the frame, the piece would exist as blank paper. Yet it becomes powerful when the audience becomes aware of what once filled the negative space. I aimed to capture a similar sense of power by eliminating the defining images on a deck of cards. By leaving only the back print of the cards, I left a suggestion of what once was. In this way, my piece emulates Rauschenberg's "Erased de Kooning Drawing" power of suggestion though negative space.

Brucker, Julia. "Robert Rauschenberg Artist Overview and Analysis." The Art Story. The Art Story Contributors, 2017. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-rauschenberg-robert.htm>.
The Art Story Contributors. "Marcel Duchamp Artist Overview and Analysis." The Art Story. The Art Story Contributors, 2017. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-duchamp-marcel.htm>.
Wolf, Justin . "Conceptual Art Movement Overview and Analysis." The Art Story. The Art Story Contributors , 2017. Web. 24 Mar. 2017.

Reviewing, Refining, and Reflecting

In Class Critique

During the critique, I received meaningful feedback from my peers that will undoubtedly improve my mixed media piece. Essentially, my piece is a deck of cards falling from a deck box. However, the cards are fixed together and bonded with the box so that they are one-inseparable unit. I desired to challenge the human perception of reality and to make the viewer deeply consider the implications of my piece. Given that a standard deck of 52 cards hanging precariously from a box would generally scatter about when lifted, my piece is a contradiction to the human expectation. I wanted to play with the idea of art being a medium for provoking thought. Prior to this piece, I was obsessed with making art based solely on aesthetics. But with this mixed media piece, I wanted to create something so utterly simple yet confusing. I have been working under the guidance of a quote by Jawaharlal Nehru, "Life is like a game of cards. The hand you are dealt is determinism; the way you play it is free will." I and many others have been told that life is like a deck or a game of cards. Cards are generally flexible and each individual card is part of a larger deck. But when these innate qualities are contradicted as they are in my piece, what does it say about life, if it says anything at all. I drew inspiration from Conceptual artists like Marcel Duchamp and On Kawara. Duchamp's readymade art challenges the audience in a provocative and beautiful way that for the most part is effortless. I don't want to force the piece to be anything more than it is. I want the meaning to simply be to find a meaning for it. Prior to the critique, I struggled to start creating because I was held back by my fear of the piece not having a proper meaning. But after discussing with my peers, they reminded me that meaning isn't necessarily always a definition; it can simply be to make someone think. And this is exactly what the meaning of my piece is. I realize that the designs on the backs of the cards will also have an affect on the meaning of the piece. I currently have three decks of cards: one with a standard card design, an old tourist deck with a picture of a beach, and one with Rodin's "The Thinker." I am experimenting with the impact each has on my piece as a whole. I am starting to understand the subtleties that greatly impact conceptual art. When an artist no longer relies on a piece's aesthetic qualities and instead depends solely on ideas, minute details have enormous consequences.

Reflection

Through the completion of this piece, I have come to understand more about mixed media, conceptual art, and the purpose of art. Prior to this piece, I was unfamiliar with readymade and conceptual art. Upon analyzing the work of conceptual artists like Marcel Duchamp and Robert Rauschenberg, I've started to notice the basis of art is rooted in ideas, not exclusively aesthetics. My entire perception of art is going through a small metamorphosis. I never considered that art could simply exist to challenge itself. Nor did I consider that art was an interactive experience through which the audience participates by analyzing. In other words, I didn't realize that the audience gives art meaning or value. I've always considered art to be a closed relationship between the artist and the artwork, but now I'm starting to change my mind. The audience is as important to a piece of art as the artist is. And in regards to what art is, I agree with Rauschenberg who said that art cannot be created. Art is something we as people find and share with the world. We don't manufacture aesthetics, we manufacture ideas that accompany the art we find. Art starts dialogue with people's surroundings and creates introspective conversation with oneself. This is a key component of conceptual art that I will incorporate into all of my work from now on. As a conceptual piece, "Ruminate" succeeds in focusing the attention of the viewer on the idea rather than the aesthetics. As such, it successfully emulates the work of Marcel Duchamp's work. Considering that the piece encourages and demands the audience to give the piece meaning and that it works with its imperfections, it also successfully emulates Robert Rauschenberg's "Erased de Kooning Drawing." A key element of this emulation is the inclusion of power through suggestion of negative space.
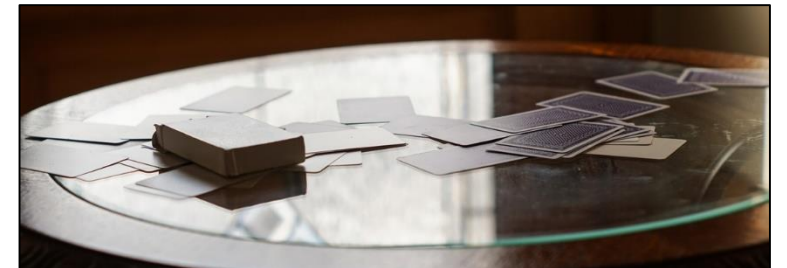
Communication of Ideas: Meaning: Conceptual Qualities

"Ruminate" is the formation of a question in which the audience possesses the answer. The negative space on the cards is a suggestion of what once was suits and colors. The unity of the cards with similar front and back faces contradicts the medium as playing cards are unique with distinguishing characteristics. Guided by the quote by Jawaharlal Nehru, "Life is like a game of cards. The hand you are dealt is determinism; the way you play it is free will," the piece asks a simple question about its connection to life. But on a simpler level, without the guidance of any quote, "Ruminate" asks the audience to give it a meaning. In other words, "Ruminate" forms a relationship between itself, the audience, and their surroundings where it gives the reader an idea and expects interpretation in exchange. I believe in Robert Rauschenberg's belief that art is interactive; the audience is a part of the piece because it is the audience who determines its value and meaning. I did not create "Ruminate" with a definite answer nor did I create this piece to define it myself. I created "Ruminate" because I wanted the audience to think and question their perception of art. Because my piece is conceptual and does not rely on aesthetics, it is solely about the idea presented in the piece.

If anything, I wanted to challenge my own perception of art. Prior to this piece, I created art based on aesthetics that lacked any real conceptual ideas. To ensure that "Ruminate" was different, I had to integrate "chance" as a artistic technique. If I were to control every aspect of the piece, it would cease to be about the idea and instead rely on aesthetics. Therefore, I must admit to myself and the audience that the piece has flaws. For example, during the painting phase, uneven coats were applied and the card box ripped. But instead of covering up these flaws, I allowed them to propel my piece forward. I believe we focus too much on "beauty" in art that we forget the ideas upon which art is founded. Art is not something we produce, it's something we find. And if that's the case, we must stop seeking perfection. I also believe that we don't think enough anymore. In world where unlimited amounts of data are accessible instantaneously, we've forgotten how to consider things for ourselves. That's why for this piece, I created it without a concrete definition. If I have to tell the audience what my piece means, haven't I failed as an artist (at least as a conceptual artist)? The meaning of the piece must be determined by the audience. Because my part is done. My part was finding the art and sharing it. It's time for me to step back and let the audience give "Ruminate" a meaning. I'd liken it to a parent watching a child grow; no matter what I tell the world they are, the world will always think differently, as they should.

Skills and Techniques: Process: Ephemera

Location Scouting

For this piece, finding a proper location to shoot is vital not only for the final photograph, but also for the safety of those in front and behind the camera. I personally chose to shoot on the beach at South Shore Park. There, I had access to Lake Michigan, a large body of water with a shore comprised of mostly rocks. This ensured that I would not light myself on fire or burn the environment around me. Furthermore, you should pick a location with minimal ambient light. Avoid high traffic areas and do not shoot in a location with a large amount of trees or grass.

Shot Preparation

Prior to taking the photos, set up a simple contraption to guide the sparks produced by the steel wool. Starting with a metal whisk, remove the handle and attach a spool of speaker wire to the base of the whisk with a few knots. Be sure to bring fire resistant gloves and eye protection to the location as well as steel wool and matches.


Shooting

Place your camera on a tripod near the edge of the water. Direct the camera along the shoreline and make sure that the shot is straight. Set your camera settings to an aperture of f/10, ISO 400, and a shutter speed of ten seconds. I personally shot on a Sony A6000 with a 16-50 mm lens at a focal length of 16mm. My settings were just wide enough to capture all of my light painting, however I would suggest framing the shot wider than necessary as the photo can be cropped later. Optimally, a remote trigger would be used to start the exposure but in my case I had a friend help me work the camera while I did the light painting. Start by walking a fair distance away from the camera in a straight line. Note that the exposure is ten seconds and when the shutter closes, you want to be one or two feet away from the camera. Mark in the sand where you will start the exposure from and prepare the steel wool contraption by setting a starting length for your speaker wire. Using a match, light the steel wool and start the exposure. Run towards the camera while quickly spinning the steel wool.

Experimentation

When capturing the long exposure, experiment with different shutter speeds, apertures, and ISOs. The optimal settings should provide a dark scene capable of allowing enough light into the sensor as to retain fine detail without noticeable overexposure. Before I captured my final image, I also experimented with various mediums including glow sticks, flashlights, and my phone. Truthfully, my original idea was to encase a bridge and stream in light. As such, my initial month of experimentation was focused on more controlled light sources. Using vinyl tubing and glow sticks, I created rings of light that produced a smoother image when thrown. On a technical level, they worked. However, I did not anticipate the limitations of my initial shooting location which washed out the light of the glow sticks. In the first park I decided to shoot at, there was an excessive amount of ambient light created by yellow street lights. As a result of the strong ambient light being captured by the sensor, the glow sticks were barely visible in the final image. This of course could have been combatted by careful camera positioning or a lower f-stop, which I did indeed try, but the previous left the image with an overly warm tone while the latter overexposed the entire image. At the first location, I tried to encase a playground in light as well. I had to give up on this idea because of the ambient light. When I moved onto the bridge and stream idea, I was able to better control the effect of the ambient light however, an unsettling yellow tone still muddled the image. At this point, I switched to my phone and a flashlight. While I managed to achieve an interesting effect, it lacked meaning and depth. Furthermore, I almost broke my foot as I foolishly decided to run through the stream without first canvassing it for rocks or checking the depth of the water. I mention this because this was the beginning of my idiocy. For weeks after, I tested different light sources and tried to incorporate the glow sticks into my piece. Finally, I decided to use my backup idea which was steel wool. On the beach, I wanted to capture sparks and reflections on the water so once again I decided to walk waist deep through Lake Michigan while spinning the steel wool. This was unnecessary as my final piece was shot on the shore. But it did allow me to see how the sparks affected various surfaces. On water, the sparks tended to create a consistent streak of light as they bounced off the surface of the water. On the rocky shore, the sparks didn't burn out as quickly thus created more streaks of light as they bounced off the rocks several times. In the end, I decided that allowing the sparks to bounce off both the water and rocks was the most interesting. There exists a juxtaposition of land and water and a variation in the organic lines on the left and right side of the piece. Whereas on the right, the sparks form clean arcs, the sparks on the left side of the piece appear to burst into multiple thin lines.
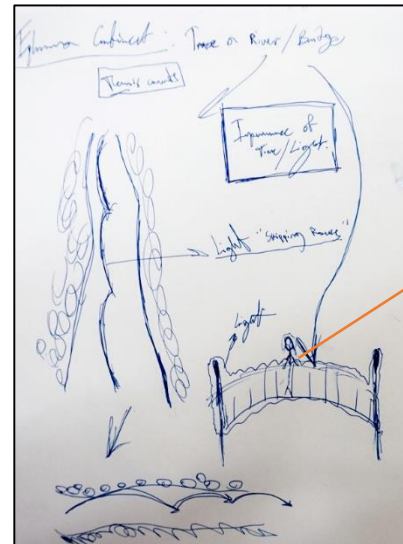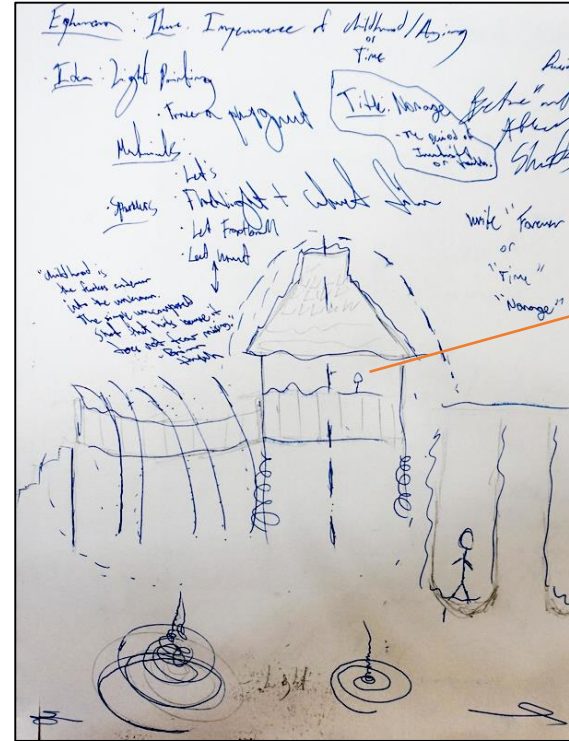
# Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration

The piece "Sojourn" draws inspiration from the works of photographer Gjon Mili and the light painter, Vicki DaSilva. Most famous for his stroboscopic photography, Gjon Mili's work captured and examined the movement of the human body. Through single exposures, he managed to display his subjects as they existed throughout various points in time. Mili also explored the nature of movement through light painting. In his photo of the violinist, Mili captured the movement of the bow as it traveled through space. The viewer is guided through his photos by the light produced by the subject and the light focused on the subjects via flash units. His composition is uncluttered and his dark, oftentimes black, backgrounds create a strong contrast between them and the subject. I attempted to create this strong juxtaposition in my piece by incorporating a dark background that contrasted with my light source. I tried to emulate the sense of movement present in Mili's light paintings by forming a spiral of light that naturally guides the viewer through the piece. Of course, Mili's work highlighted natural movements thus his light paintings do not incorporate exaggerated organic shapes as "Sojourn" does. At the core of both Mili's photography and my long exposure is the desire to breakdown movement and time and combine what was with what is to create something that will always be. Gjon Mili was far more subtle in regards to his depiction of movement compared to me.

Mili, Gjon. A Tumbling Sequence, 1962. Digital image. SLIDE SHOW: GJON MILI AND THE SCIENCE OF MOVEMENT. The New Yorker, 5 Nov. 2013. Web. 15 Nov. 2016.
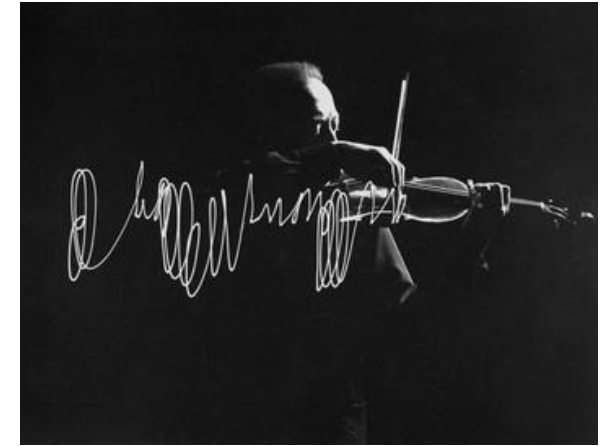
Mili, Gjon. The Violinist Jascha Heifetz Playing in Mili's Studio, with a Light Attached to the Bow Tracing Its Movement, 1952. Digital image. SLIDE SHOW: GJON MILI AND THE SCIENCE OF MOVEMENT. The New Yorker, 5 Nov. 2013. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.
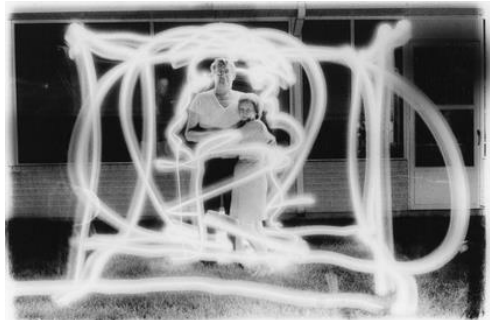
DaSilva, Vicki. Mom & Dad, 1981. Digital image. Vicki DaSilva. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

DaSilva, Vicki. I Am Malala, 2013. Digital image. Vicki DaSilva. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

I wanted my piece to be vibrant and striking which is where "Sojourn" became inspired by Vicki DaSilva. A pioneer of the concept of light graffiti, Vicki DaSilva's art is ephemeral as it is created with light and captured though long exposure photography. Her art often contains a message; much like graffiti on walls, she writes words that are rooted in politics, media, and social issues. Unlike Gjon Mili, DaSilva incorporates her background into the subject of her light paintings. The backgrounds are relevant to the words she writes with light. For example, in her piece "I Am Malala" DaSilva takes the photo in a classroom which directly relates to Malala Yousafzai and her fight for education. Her statements are bold and complement the background. DaSilva also utilizes light for abstract light painting as well. In her piece "Mom and Dad" she encases the subjects in light to add movement to the piece as well as subtly expose the impermanence of life. My goal was to incorporate DaSilva's bold use of light to convey a message. I chose to be more subtle and avoided light graffiti with words and instead used an abstract form juxtaposed with city lights. I also wanted to incorporate the background into the piece in a more meaningful way but ultimately I don't think the background of my piece is anything more than superficial. In this way, I failed to truly emulate Vicki DaSilva. However, I do think that I managed to effectively use light as a medium to express thoughts as DaSilva does in her work.

DaSilva, Vicki. "Bio & Cv." VICKI DASILVA. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.
Barclay, Christian. "Vicki DaSilva." Format Magazine Urban Art Fashion. FormatMag, 07 Oct. 2008. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.
The New Yorker. "Slide Show: Gjon Mili and the Science of Movement." The New Yorker. The New Yorker, 5 Nov. 2013. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.
International Center of Photography. "Gjon Mili." International Center of Photography. International Center of Photography, n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

Reviewing, Refining, and Reflecting

Through the completion of this piece, I have further refined my long exposure photography skills and acquired new methods for working with light. Prior to this project, I did long exposure photography for years on a small scale. Typically, I worked with flashlights in small locations such as my bedroom. This piece challenged me to take light painting to another level. It was challenging to find a sufficiently bright light source and even more difficult to find a location with little ambient light. When I decided to use steel wool, I had to create a piece that reflected the concept of time that didn't seem cliché or superficial. In all honesty, light painting with steel wool is fairly common in photography. As such, finding a way to use the medium creatively was another challenge. Ultimately, a swirling motion that comes increasingly close to the viewer helped me surmount this difficulty. Also, my focus on the small details like the sparks that branch out from the main swirl made my piece more interesting and different. A key part of my process was accepting the unoriginality of my technique and medium. This allowed me to approach the piece from a more creative angle. I learned that the most effective way to be "original" is to first acknowledge that most things are unoriginal. Without the pressure to create something "unique", creativity flows out unfiltered. I am satisfied with my piece as it represents time as I intended. The light effectively serves as a symbol for time and the things unseen through the passing of it. The variations in line and the natural movement of the piece is clear and visually striking. In this way, my emulation of Vicki DaSilva's light painting is effective. Much like DaSilva, I used light as a method of storytelling. While her messages are often more explicit, my meaning is subtle and more open to interpretation. I didn't incorporate my background into the piece as meaningfully as DaSilva which is one aspect of "Sojourn" I wish to improve. In regards to my incorporation of Gjon Mili's style into my piece, I captured the essence of Mili's art but failed to replicate the beauty through subtlety present in his photos. My composition is busy and filled with highly exaggerated shapes whereas Mili's work is very focused and graceful. "Sojourn" captures the essence of Mili's photographs as it visualizes movement through time and space. Overall, I think "Sojourn" is a visually appealing piece. It catches the eye and doesn't demand deep contemplation in order to be understood. But if the viewer does take the time to think about the piece, they can find a profound message. I didn't want to make "Sojourn" a sad piece. I also didn't want to turn light into a metaphor for life and death. Instead, I wanted to celebrate time and examine movement. I wanted to highlight the persistence of the impermanent. And in that regard, I think my piece is a success.

Communication of Ideas: Meaning: Conceptual Qualities

"Sojourn" is an illustration of the impermanence of light as symbolism for the things unseen though the passing of time. Perception is key in our lives. How we perceive the world affects our thoughts, emotions, and senses. As perception is so vital to us, it's ironic that the human perception is flawed. We see the world as images and our minds transform them into a motion picture. This is to say, what we see is limited by our own minds. While our minds fill in details. there are certain things we simply cannot see, for example: past, present, and future. We can only see what occurs now in the present. In the postmodern novel "Slaughterhouse Five" by Kurt Vonnegut, he writes of aliens called the Tralfamadorians who are able to do what we as humans cannot; they are able to see the past, present, and future simultaneously. In this way, "Sojourn" is a contradiction to the human perception. With a ten second exposure, I captured past, present, and future. Additionally, light is impermanent thus "Sojourn" is a contradiction to light as well. Eternalized in a photograph, this image is the only evidence of what occurred on that day. But if we are to consider time as a combination of past, present, and future, we can see that this piece still exists. Somewhere in time, this piece has yet to be created. Somewhere else in time, this piece is being created. We exist in the point in time when "Sojourn" has already been created. But somewhere out there on that beach is the combination of past, present, and future and "Sojourn" is suspended midair.

"Sojourn"
Steel Wool, Digital Photography
91.44 x 51.435 cm
November, 2016

These concepts are present even in my experimentation.

This piece represents the things unseen as time moves forward. While no one may know that this piece was made on that beach, it doesn't mean it didn't exist. Just because one cannot see something does not mean it does not or did not exist. This is true for all events in time. Eventually seasons change and things seldom remain the same; but even as the new arrives, they do not negate what was. Because what was, still is despite our flawed perceptions, Like the name suggests, the light in my piece was there temporarily. But as a contradiction to itself, my ephemera piece "Sojourn" exists to examine the existence of what was, still is, and always will be. As time passes, there are things we simply won't notice. Rarely do we reflect and consider that we are not the only ones who have been where we have been. We cannot see history and we cannot comprehend what will be. The swirl in 'Sojourn' is a visualization of this. The light comes closer and closer to the lens almost as if conveying a message from time itself that says time is not merely what is or what was, but rather the persistence of then, the continuation of now, and the anticipation of what is to come. Time is not meant to be forgotten. It is to be one with the present and the future.

Skills and Techniques: Process: "Astrobleme"

Portrait Photography
Before any digital manipulation could occur, I had to photograph three people. The three featured in this piece are people I have been through trials and tribulations with. They all have distinct features that I wanted to manipulate. My process for photographing them involved finding unique locations that suited their personalities. Compositionally, they are all balanced in the center of the rule of thirds grid. For the sake of presentation, I photographed two images in portrait and one in landscape. When I photographed them, I asked them how they felt in the seconds before the shutter opened and closed. They gave me genuine emotion.

Post Processing
I processed the three portraits in Adobe Lightroom. Each photograph has a distinct look in terms of tone and mood. I emphasized the rich hues of their skin and their respective backgrounds. Overall, the edits are deeply saturated and focus heavily on dark tones and shadows.

Digital Manipulation
Once the photos were edited, I opened copies of each portrait in Adobe Photoshop. I started the manipulation by duplicating the images. From there, I used the Polygonal Lasso Tool followed by the Move Tool to cut the images and shift pieces around. Each photo was cut and moved differently based on how I viewed their personalities and the emotions they expressed.

For this portrait, I wanted to distort the smile and the eyes, two quintessential elements of the happy expression portrayed in the image. I wanted to see how much distortion it would take to completely change the expression.
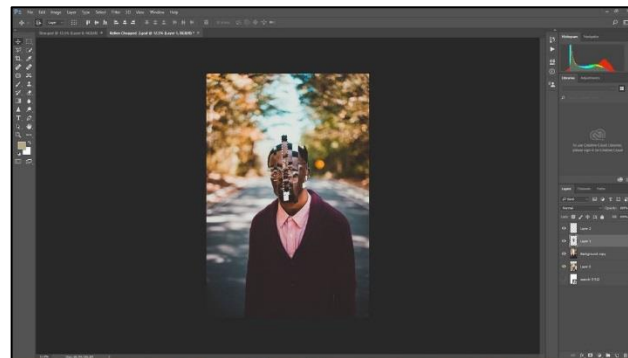
For this portrait, I wanted to focus on the idea of identity and how it is affected by grief. By shifting the different parts of the face instead of moving small features of it, I explored the ability for one to recognize an individual despite their identifying features being scrambled.
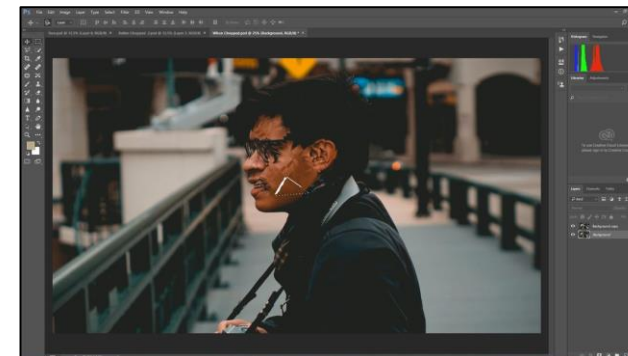
For this portrait, I wanted to create a mirror like distortion to illustrate how grief does not only change the way we look at ourselves, but also the way others perceive us. It explores grief and the way it traps people within their own reflections.

Experimentation

The entire process of crafting "Astrobleme" was rooted in experimentation. This idea of cutting and moving parts of an image to create distortion came after weeks of playing around in Photoshop. I tried using the Liquify Tool and the Lasso Tool but the distortions those created were too soft. When I started using the Polygonal Lasso Tool, I immediately gravitated toward it because of the sharp edges it creates. This sharpness is reminiscent of puzzle pieces or broken glass. I started this series experimenting on the official portrait of former United States President, Barack Obama. Before I had any images of my own, I wanted to see what forming a puzzle out of a face would do or say. By working with such an iconic figure, I learned that the distortion does not change one's ability to recognize the person, but rather, the distortion changes the mood and message of the portrait. With that particular figure, I unintentionally created a politically charged piece. My initial idea involved cutting the images and instead of having a duplicated portrait layer underneath, the photos would rest on top of layers of white. This way the cuts would appear less sincreaseubtle and the contrast between positive and negative space would. However, this juxtaposition between the photo and white space distracted from the message and introduced an unnecessary conceptual layer.
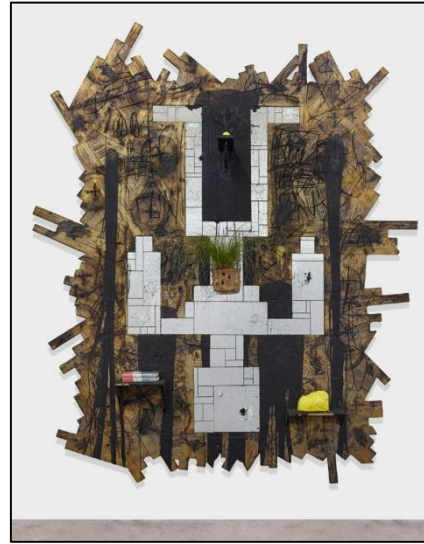

"Official portrait of Barack Obama." Wikimedia Commons, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Official _portrait_of_Barack_Obama.jpg.

Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration

Johnson, Rashid. "Falling Man." Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee Art Museum, mam.org/rashid-johnson/image-gallery.
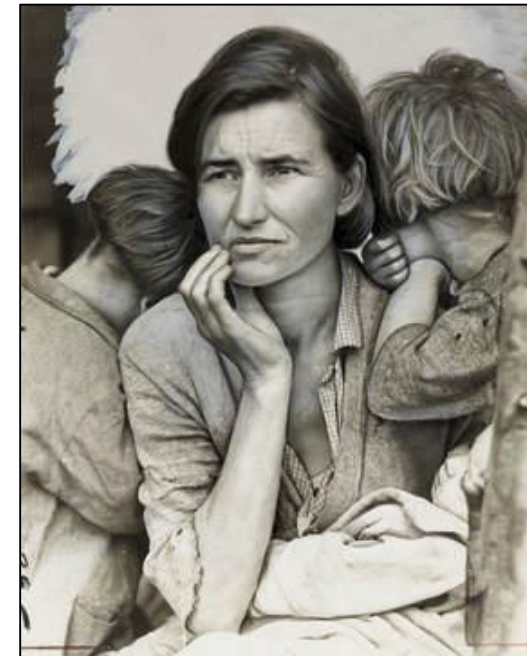

Johnson, Rashid . " Falling Man." Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee Art Museum, mam.org/rashid-johnson/image-gallery.

The piece "Astrobleme" draws inspiration from the work of artists Rashid Johnson and Dorothea Lange and psychiatrist Elizabeth Kübler-Ross. A famous American contemporary artist, Rashid Johnson's work focuses on themes of race, escape, and personal identity. Through his use of unconventional yet culturally significant mediums such as black soap and mirrors, Johnson comments on society and the African American experience in the United States. In his piece "Falling Man" he uses broken mirrors to distort the reflection of the viewer, placing them in the shoes of the falling man. He bridges the gap between art and audience and makes them a part of his work.

Lange, Dorothea. "A Destitute Mother: The Type Aided by the WPA." The Museum of Modern Art, The Museum of Modern Art, www.moma.org/collection/works/58627?locale=en.

Dorothea Lange was a documentary photographer most famous for her photographs of America during the Great Depression. One of her most iconic images, "Migrant Mother" illustrates the candid nature of Lange's work. Despite the photojournalistic nature of her photography, Lange's work was dynamic compositionally and in terms of the monochromatic gradations. She contextualized her images without harshly contrasting her subjects and their surroundings. Her images are raw and emotionally pure.

Elizabeth Kübler-Ross was one of the driving forces behind the Kübler-Ross model, a set of five stages detailing the typical responses to grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. These stages were developed initially to describe the grieving of patients with terminal illness. But it later was used as a model for all grieving. The common misconception society has of these stages is that they represent the "right" way to grieve. This is not true as grieving is a unique process for everyone. Some experience all five of the stages, some of the stages, or none of the stages. At the end of her life, Kübler-Ross stated that her model had been misinterpreted as grief is an individualistic process through which people reestablish normality. There is no constant or formula to dictate how to do it.

Smith, Roberta. "In 'Fly Away,' Rashid Johnson Keeps the Focus on Race." The New York Times, The New York Times, 15 Sept. 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/09/16/arts/design/in-fly-away-rashid-johnson-keeps-the-focus-on-race.html.
The Art Story Foundation. "Dorothea Lange Biography, Art, and Analysis of Works." The Art Story, The Art Story Foundation, 2017, www.theartstory.org/artist-lange-dorothea.htm.
Feldman, David B. "Why the Five Stages of Grief Are Wrong." Psychology Today, Sussex Publishers, 7 July 2017, www.psychologytoday.com/blog/supersurvivors/201707/why-the-five-stages-grief-are-wrong.
Jennifer Latson, Jennifer. "Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and the Stages of Grief: How She Changed Dying." Time, Time, 8 July 2015, time.com/3946458/kubler-ross-history/

Reviewing, Refining, and Reflecting

Throughout the completion of this piece, I have improved my digital manipulation and storytelling skills. Prior to "Astrobleme" I didn't manipulate or distort my images. Instead, I focused on the traditional side of photography and storytelling via subject matter and composition. This piece challenged me to work with photographs and manipulate their stories in unconventional ways. I am satisfied with the outcome of this piece. "Astrobleme" does what I intended it to do. The process was a success as I distorted the faces of those close to me while still retaining their essence in the underlying photograph. The cuts, while jarring, effectively distort the expressions of the figures.

Overall, "Astrobleme" emulates both Rashid Johnson's and Dorothea Lange's work successfully. I introduced themes of identity and contextualized images with backgrounds and settings. Johnson's work, specifically his series of falling men, engages the audience and places them at the forefront of the work. I established a similar sense of audience engagement by distorting the images to ask the audience questions about identity and their personal sense of self. Dorothea Lange's work focuses on dramatically documenting raw emotion whilst contextualizing the subject with their immediate surroundings. The unmanipulated portraits do this well as the subjects and backgrounds add character and story.

Communication of Ideas: Meaning: Conceptual Qualities

"Astrobleme" is a three piece digital manipulation series that focuses on a personal stage of grief through skewed faces and identities. This piece is part of a larger series regarding my experience with grief and how I traverse through it. I call this stage "Astrobleme" because it is defined as "an eroded remnant of a large crater made by the impact of a meteorite or comet." To me, grief and its catalysts are the meteorites and comets whilst the crater remnants are the people affected by them. When grief strikes, it changes us whether we want it to or not. It changes the way we see and treat others. And as such, it also changes the way people perceive us. Grief distorts our sense of self. We question who we are, why we're here, and what lies ahead of us. The pieces of our identity are shifted around but I argue that the goal is not to return to the image we once were. Because through all distortion, we are still us at the core. No matter how much our features shift or distort, we are us. Travelling through grief is never about returning to how we were before grief. Rather, the journey is about finding ourselves in the rubble and being able to see ourselves in our reflections again.

Skills and Techniques: Process: "Autonomy"

Photograph Subject

Take a photo of the subject you will be painting. Place the subject in front of a white wall; if you are the subject, position your camera on a tripod and use a self timer. The subject should look as they normally do; avoid shots that are unnatural. The goal is to capture the subject as they are, not what they want to be. Once the shot is taken, crop the photo and increase the sharpness of the photo.


Stretch Canvas

Connect four three foot stretchers and staple them at the corners. Make sure that the frame has four right angles. From there, cut an appropriate length of canvas and staple it to the frame. Start by applying pressure to one side of the canvas; pull it toward the stretcher nearest you and staple it to the frame. Pull the canvas toward the opposite stretcher and staple it to the frame as well. Repeat the process for the remaining canvas. Ensure that the canvas is tight but has enough slack so that you can easily press into the canvas with your finger. For each corner, form two "ears" with the excess canvas and fold one over the other then staple it down to the stretchers. Once completed, remove all excess canvas with scissors.

Canvas Preparation

Using either a 1.5 inch (38.1 mm) or 2 inch (50.8 mm) brush, apply an even coat of white gesso to the canvas. Apply the gesso in one direction to ensure a smooth painting surface. Once the gesso has dried, apply three separate washes (Red, Orange, Yellow) to the canvas. The three hues should divide the canvas into three roughly equal sections vertically. Mix the acrylic paint with copious amounts of water before applying the wash with a 3/4 inch flat brush.

Transferring Image

Project your image onto the canvas and create an outline of the subject by tracing the projection with a pencil. Be sure to trace highlights and shadows.
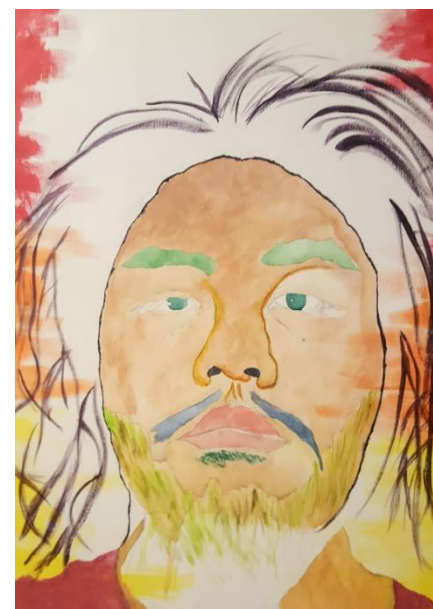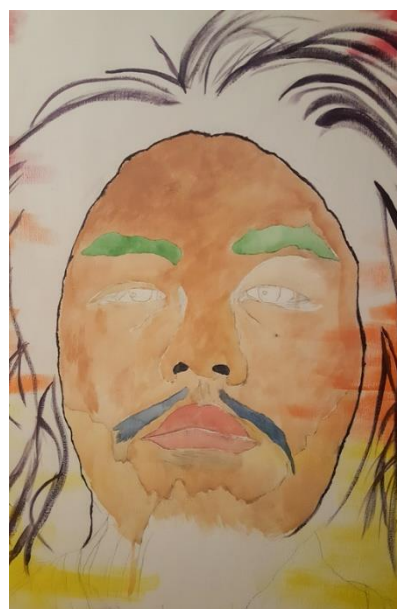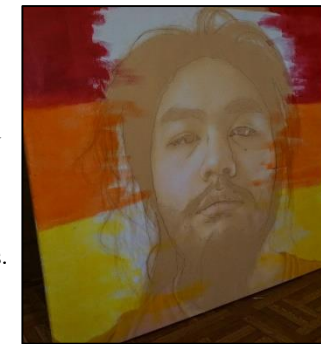
Painting

Start by mixing violet and black and use a 3/4 inch flat brush to outline the face and hair. Then, mix a skin tone with burnt umber, yellow, and white. Apply a coat of the skin tone to the face. Vary the intensity of the skin tone by applying more to certain areas and watering down the paint in other areas. Refer to the photo of the subject to see where the shadows and highlights are. Next, apply a wash to the lips with a size 8 flat brush; I mixed primary red with titanium white and watered it down. Using a 3/4 inch flat brush, apply a light green wash to the eyebrows and a dark blue wash to the mustache. With the same brush, start adding paint to the beard area with quick strokes downward. With a size four flat brush, paint the eyes blue-green, define the nose, and add hair underneath the bottom lip with small quick diagonal strokes with a dry brush and opaque paint.

Using a size 8 brush, further define the eyes and lips. Clean the brush, then add texture to the facial hair with quick flicking strokes. For both the mustache and eyebrows, use darker shades of the hue of their respective washes. Fill in the eyes and add shadows around the eyelids with a size four flat brush. Finally, with a 3/4 inch flat brush, start adding more colors to the beard using the same quick strokes.


At this point, paint the white area above the head red and apply a violet wash to the blank space where the hair will be painted. This will ensure that the white canvas will not show through the hair. Use a 3/4 inch brush to continue adding more and more layers to the beard until the area is sufficiently covered, then build upon the hair in a similar fashion. Start from the hairline then use a sweeping motion to create an organic line away from the face. As the brushstrokes extend further away from the face, allow them to fade and leave faint streaks of color.

Experimentation

When painting the features of the face as well as the hair, experiment with various hues by mixing several colors together. Throughout the painting process, I didn't restrict myself in regards to the color palette. I chose colors based on how I felt and what I desired. By disregarding the technical aspects of painting, I was able to emulate the strong color used by the Fauvists as well as their brushstrokes. I painted based on what I felt instead of what I thought. Subconsciously, the principles of design and elements of art may have influenced my decisions, but overall, I painted without thinking. This allowed me to try new methods and materials without hesitation which led to my overall success. Prior to this project, I only mixed paint using brushes and I only applied paint using brushes as well. But for my self portrait, I experimented with plastic palette knives. With these new tools added to my repertoire, I now know how to thoroughly mix paint to get an even hue and I can apply paint in various ways to achieve different textures. I used three different palette knives; one for dark paints, light paints, and one for applying paint. My technique for mixing paint was to swirl the different hues around with the tip of the palette knife, then spread the paint back and forth with the bottom surface of the knife. I only used the large palette knife to apply paint to the shirt area. First, I applied a rough layer of acrylic paint on top of the violet wash by dipping the edge of the knife into the leftover paint on my dark hue palette then pressing the knife's edge to the canvas. From there, I dragged the paint down which left a rough texture. Once the layer dried, I dipped the edge of the knife into yellow paint and pressed it horizontally into the canvas and dragged the edge to the right. I then dragged the knife through the yellow streaks vertically to create more texture. In addition to palette knifes, I experimented with a straw and watered down paint. I placed runny acrylic paint onto a brush and dabbed it on the top of the canvas and allowed the paint to run down the canvas. I used a straw to blow on the paint as it dripped which allowed me to spread the paint and make interesting shapes. I flipped my canvas upside down and repeated this process starting from the shoulder area.This allowed me to add movement and visual interest to the piece.
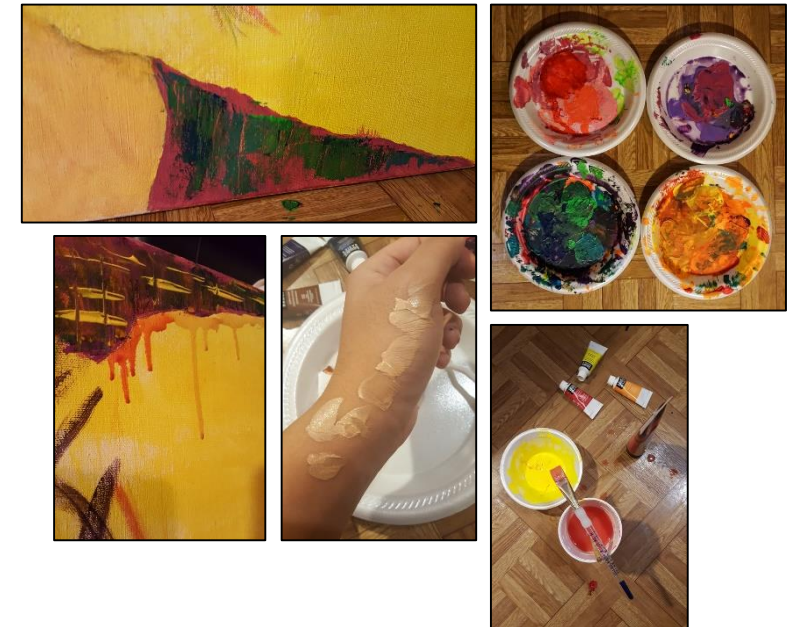
Critical Investigation: Artistic Inspiration
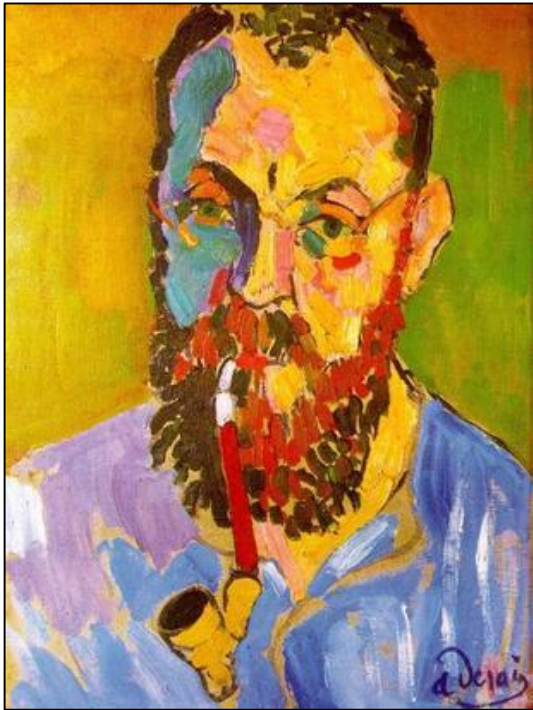
Derain, Andre. Portrait Of Matisse. Digital image. WikiArt. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Dec. 2016.

Lemus, German. Portrait of Abraham Lincoln. Digital image. German Lemus. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Dec. 2016. .

The piece "Autonomy" draws inspiration from André Derain and German Lemus's portrait of Abraham Lincoln. Credited as a founder of Fauvism, André Derain focused on using vibrant colors and visible brushstrokes as a means of expression as well as a way to accentuate space and light. The colors he used weren't true to their subject, rather, they were true to his perception of his subject. In Fauvist art, color was a fundamental element that conveyed messages and ideas. A prime example of Fauvist art is Derain's "Portrait Of Matisse" where the colors are exaggerated and the brushstrokes are visible. I aimed to emulate both Derain's use of color and his brushstrokes. In my piece, there exists a similar focus on color that does not aim to depict reality but rather, my perception of myself. In regards to brushstrokes, I tried to emulate the rough and free strokes of Derain in my hair and beard. Much like Derain's brushstrokes, my brushstrokes are visible and layered on top of each other. My piece differs from Derain's as my background is comprised of three solid colors whereas his is a homogenous combination of various hues. Furthermore, my piece isn't as focused on shadow and light as Derain's work was. My face only has a few shadows created by dark skin tones whereas Derain's piece exaggerates the shadows on the subject's face though dark paint. In addition, Derain's paint is far thicker and more opaque than the acrylic I used which allowed him to achieve more vibrant hues and defined texture.

When painting this piece, I wanted to incorporate an urban feel and aesthetic. This is where I drew inspiration from the urban contemporary artist, German Lemus and his untitled portrait of Abraham Lincoln. Lemus's work incorporates vibrant colors and emphasizes light and shadow. In this way, his work is reminiscent of the fauvists and impressionists. In his portrait of Abraham Lincoln, his lines drip and do not blend but instead layer to create depth and shadow. I emulated this layering in the areas of hair in my piece. Rather than blending, I layered multiple colors to make areas lighter and darker. Also, I allowed my paint to drip in the background to simulate spray paint. In regards to differences, Lemus's portrait is an abstract representation whereas my piece is structured. Furthermore, Lemus's lines are bold and thick whereas mine are relatively thin. Overall, I think I successfully emulated German Lemus's piece. My use of color to add depth and urban aesthetic are clearly inspired from Lemus's style.

Lemus, German. "About." German Lemus. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Dec. 2016. <http://www.germanlemus.com/about>.
"Fauvism Movement, Artists and Major Works." The Art Story. The Art Story Foundation, n.d. Web. 1 Dec. 2016. <http://www.theartstory.org/movement-fauvism.htm>.
"André Derain Biography, Art, and Analysis of Works." The Art Story. The Art Story Foundation, n.d. Web. 1 Dec. 2016. <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-derain-andre.htm>.

Reviewing, Refining, and Reflecting
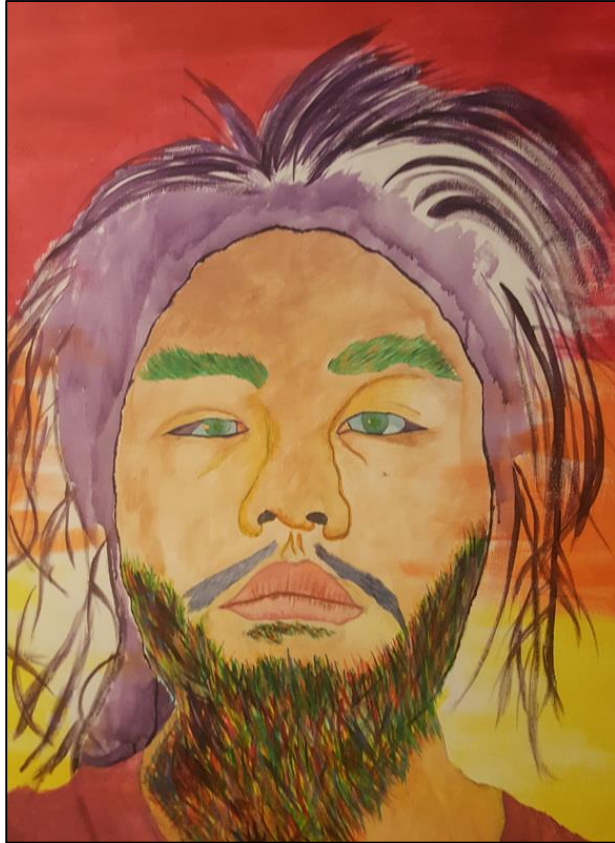
Though the completion of this piece, I have become more familiar with acrylic paint and painting techniques. Prior to this piece, I painted on small canvases. This was a learning experience as it allowed me to better understand color and explore my own style. I found it challenging to make the portrait a self-portrait because I struggled to find a way to make it my own. I wanted to represent my own perception of myself in an authentic manner. Color helped me surmount this challenge. Through my use of vibrant colors and free lines I was able to express myself in a way I deem real and true to my perception. This is why I consider "Autonomy" a success. The piece looks as I wanted it to and my intentions are clear. Through the juxtaposition of light and dark and use of organic lines, I demonstrated my freedom to be creative. The vibrant colors are a successful symbol of my thought process and decisions as an artist. Furthermore, by showing my perception of myself to the viewer, I am able to celebrate individuality through the piece.
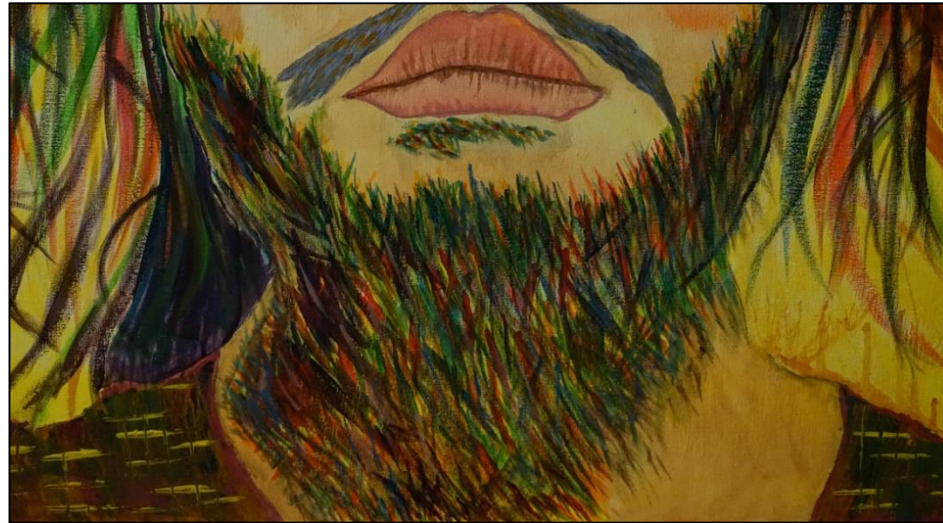
"Autonomy" is intentionally unapologetic. I used colors that juxtaposed and lines that look rough to emphasize my artistic autonomy. As color was a device I used to do this, I am able to say that my emulation of André Derain was successful. I used different colors to tell as story much like Derain did in his work. While his brushstrokes may be more definite and his colors more exaggerated, our work, at the core, is mutually focused on expression through color. As a result, my piece also successfully emulates German Lemus's work. By allowing my paint to drip on the canvas, I achieved a similar aesthetic to Lemus's untitled portrait of Abraham Lincoln. My use of vibrant colors also allowed me to emulate his style. While our mediums may differ, our pieces both strive to make a statement through the juxtaposition of color and figure.
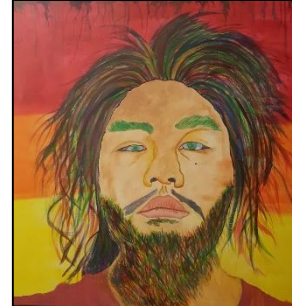
"Autonomy"
Size: 91x91cm
Acrylic on Canvas
November, 2016

Communication of Ideas: Meaning: Conceptual Qualities

"Autonomy" is a celebration of individuality through vibrant color and loose lines. Color is symbolic for my freedom as an artist to think and create unapologetically. When asked who we are, seldom do we tell the truth. Because the truth paints a picture we rarely enjoy. With my self portrait, I wanted to represent myself based on my own perception of who I am. Those around us have their own perceptions of who we are. My piece is not a statement that negates the perceptions of others, but rather, a statement declaring my autonomy. I am an independent being much like everyone else on this Earth. Regardless of what people think of me, I am me. And even if society influences me, no one can stop me from creating art the way I want to create it. More than anything, my piece is a call to all people to celebrate who they are. I have painted myself as I see myself. I emphasized the hair and beard because those are parts of me that people always tell me to change. Those are the parts of me I have complete control of. My hair is symbolic of my personal freedom. I chose to paint my normal facial expression because I don't want to hide who I am from the viewer. As a testament to this, I even left in a mole under my eye. These are parts of who I am. This is my unapologetic expression.