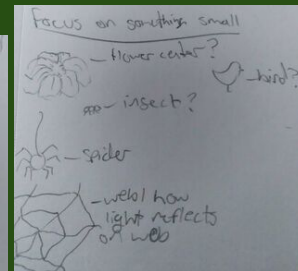# Small Things

I originally went about this project a completely different way, and eventually decided to shift my focus and research other inspirations. I wanted to focus on something more natural. With further planning I was trying to find ways to photograph plants in my own house. I wanted to take pictures of my succulent, which I sketched out in the picture to the left, but I couldn't find a place with good enough lighting. I still wanted to find new ways to photograph the wildflowers; I **experimented** with a flashlight and different **hues** but nothing was sticking and I eventually decided I needed to look elsewhere for inspiration. I researched different photographers and found Dalton, and was inspired to look outside.
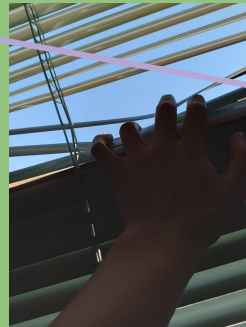
Experimentation Photos

Small Things by Teresa Schmidt (2020)

I went by the lake the take pictures. My new focus was on something small, which I stuck with in the end. I sketched and photographed ducks, spider webs, and flowers and eventually settled on what became *Small Things.* I didn't expect there to be so many ducks at the lake but they were fun to take pictures of, although none of the pictures carried the message I wanted to bring. When photographing the ducks, I **experimented** with many different **angles.** I took some pictures from below, which captured the **reflection** of the ducks in the puddle very well. I also took some from above to capture the swimming ducks. Then I experimented with close up and **focused** photographs, as well as **symmetry.**

With the photos at left, I **experimented** with different **angles, contrast, lighting, close ups, motion,** and **simplicity.** I splashed the counter with water droplets and flower petals when I photographed the vase with flowers to bring more to the picture. The blurry image was completely unplanned; all I did was spin very fast and take random pictures, and I liked how the one shown turned out. It is nearly opposite to the crisp and clean image of the curtain.

Experimentation Photos

Small Things

Carder Bumblebee by Stephen Dalton (left), process of editing Small Things (right)

After the **experimentation** I decided on the photo I wanted to use. I chose Small Things because it brought significance to a small piece of nature, which was my message. The original photo is shown left, before I edited it. I did not like the lack of focus in the image. It was a very clean image but I needed more to be brought out of it, I needed the bees to be more focused on, and I needed the image to feel separate from the rest of the world, similar to Carder Bumblebee. To edit, I used an app called Snapseed. I'm familiar with the app because I've done photo editing before. Snapseed offers their own filters, but you can also customize the edits to your liking. I clicked "tune image".

Small Things was inspired from Stephen Dalton's Carder Bumblebee. Dalton photographs animals, insects, and nature and is known for being the first to take clear pictures of creatures mid-flight. I liked how this picture focused on the bee and flowers and sort of blurred out the **background**, and it's the same concept I was going for with Small Things.

Stephen Dalton is a photographer inspired by nature. He got into photography in his 20's and he combined these passions to photograph nature scenes and animals. He was the first to be able to take sharp photographs of insects in flight. Carder Bumblebee (bottom right) was my main inspiration piece for Small Things. I love how his work makes nature seem so significant and beautiful and I tried to capture a similar state of mind with Small Things. His work inspired me because of the **focus** and attention to tiny details all of his images have. The fact that he chooses to focus his images on small plants, animals and insects shows how passionate he is about nature. This passion is highlighted in my piece as well, and in my **experimentation** photos, which have a theme of nature.
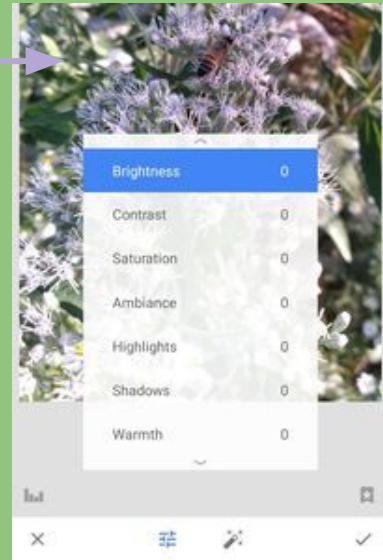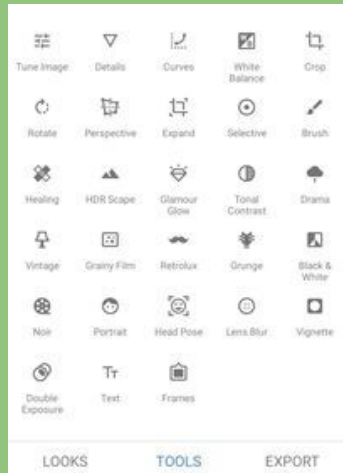
Bee and Wildflower

To start, I **planned** out the **color combinations** I would need for each part of the painting. I put color swatches in my sketchbook. I noted the different **textures** in the photo that I would have to show in the painting. I wrote out ways to draw the hairy part of the bee, and how to make the thin, tiny parts of the flower. These parts were too small to make with a paintbrush, so I listed objects I could use instead. I also listed how I wanted to incorporate Dalton's and Monet's techniques into my work. For Dalton, I wanted there to be a focus on the bee and the wings, because he is known for the **stillness** of the creatures he photographs. I also wanted the **background** of the painting to be very blurred and not as clear as the prominent objects. For Monet, I looked at brushstrokes and noted how he made a cloud like **texture** with his paint. Because oil paints were a medium I had never used before, I knew a lot of **experimentation** would come into play when making my painting. With my art, I tend to jump right in and see where it takes me. I prefer fixing mistakes when they happen, but I had a basic outline for what I wanted to do for this project. First, I knew I needed to sketch the image I would paint onto the canvas. Then, I would do **washes** of color, and finally another layer of the final colors, which I would then **blend**. This is my basic process for any painting project.


Experimentation with oil paints in Monet's style, in my sketchbook (right) and on the canvas (left).

I practiced Monet brush techniques here. The "cloudy" texture was used for the background. The most difficult brushstroke for me was the soft lines, because it took a lot of control and focus, and it all had to be done in one quick movement. It was also hard for me to not completely blend the colors, because I usually went over them multiple times and they would all blend into one color. This often happened when I used the stipple technique. The stippling would be used to make the bee's hair, and the soft lines would mostly be used for the flowers.

This is the section of *Small Things* I recreated as *Bee and Wildflowers*. I found that the cropped version had more physical similarities to *Carder Bumblebee* than the un-cropped version did, but the message remained the same. I liked the way this version of the photo focused on the bee and the flowers even better and how the background was blurred, amplifying the **focus**. This was the piece of Dalton's work I was trying to bring into my own.

Bee and Wildflower by Teresa Schmidt (2020)
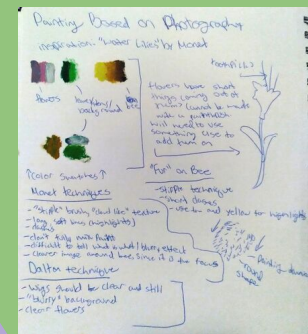
Planning page from sketchbook (right middle), *Small Things* (cropped) (right bottom)

Bee and Wildflower

My painting inspiration was *Water Lilies - The Clouds* by Monet. Monet's Water Lilies series is a series of about 250 oil paintings of water lilies. I attempted to bring an **impressionistic** look into my painting and I looked at Monet's brush techniques and color combinations to achieve that look. Monet's brush techniques are very unique to his work and I found them admirable and attempted to reflect them onto my painting.

First I had to pick which part of the photo I wanted to recreate. I considered several different sections, which I drew out on the actual photo. I knew I wanted a bee in the painting, because that would match the theme best in my opinion. At first I wanted to do a close up of the leaf in the top right corner, but I didn't think it would look good in an **impressionist** style. I decided on the section with the bee on top because it had more **color** to it and I felt like I would be able to focus on the theme better. I also liked the focus on the flowers and the blurred background, which I could recreate using Monet techniques. The first step was sketching the outline of the photo on the canvas. There wasn't a way for me to trace the image onto the canvas to get exact proportions, so I had to estimate. I was okay with this though, I've had a lot of practice with proportions and I didn't want it to look exactly like the photo. I tackled a small space first. Right away I noticed the difference between acrylic paints and oil paints. Oil paints are harder to spread, but they never dry, and I ended up making a mess of it all. I went over the paint a few times until I got a result I was kind of okay with, and then moved on to a new section. The good thing about oil paints is that because it never dries you can always go back and change things when needed.

Small Things (cropped) and *Water Lilies - The Clouds* by Monet

Process Photos - mapping out *Small Things* (left) and using a pin to add small details (right)

Over time, I got better with the paint. I began using the different techniques; the cloudy look for the background, the soft **lines** for the flowers, and the short **dashes** on the **texture** of the bee. I was going all over the place, I would move onto another section before I'd finished one, which is something I commonly do when making art. Usually it can be problematic but with oil paints it didn't have much of an effect because I could always tweak things if I needed. To make the smaller parts of the flower, I used a safety pin. I opened it, dipped it in paint and pressed it on the painting to make a thin line. I originally wanted to do this with a toothpick, but it was too thick, and then I tried a string, but the paint didn't show up clear enough on the canvas.

Cutting My Finger Off

For this project, a lot of my **experimentations** were practicing the anatomy of the hand. I needed to understand the **proportions** of the hand for the best results on my final piece. I also **experimented** with the painting style of Denis Sarazhin. He uses **line** to add **texture**, and **color** to add **depth** to his work. His piece contains many colors other than the color of the flesh, including bright orange and purple. There were two main components to this project that I would have to practice to carry out this idea. First was drawing hands and second was the painting technique. I practiced drawing hands by positioning my own hand and by sketching how the hand in my piece would look.

Cutting My Finger Off by Teresa Schmidt (2021)

Planning and Experimentation Sketchbook Pages

These images show the texture created by my painting compared to the texture created by Sarazhin's.

The goal of this project was to make viewers feel uneasy and unsettled without incorporating gore into the project. The piece suggests gore, but there is a lack of **realism** in the cut up thumb that doesn't allow a gory aspect to come to light. The cut up pieces are made with clear, sharp lines to illustrate a clean cut, and the inside is hollow and black, bringing an unrealistic aspect into the work. **Realism** is also challenged by the disproportionate placing of the knife and the lack of a ground to separate from a wall. The **background** is simply empty **space.**
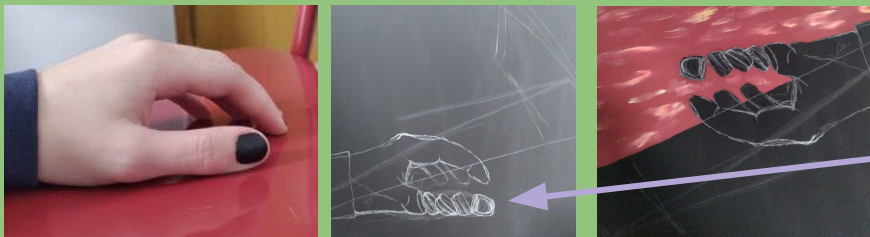My inspiration was Sign 6 by Denis Sarazhin. This piece is from a series of paintings of hands in a similar style to this one. I knew from the start what I wanted to portray in this project but I was unsure the style I wanted to use to take it on. I was drawn to this piece because of the very real texture created with angular lines and almost **impressionistic** blending techniques. I've always loved this painting technique but I've never actually tried it before until now. This technique is seen in all of Sarazhin's work and it is something I admire about him as an artist.
Next I planned out how I wanted it to look on the canvas. I went through a few ideas. At first I wanted to show the knife cutting through the fingers but then I decided it would be more ominous to have it resting beside the hand. I looked at doing an overhead view but it didn't resonate with me. I decided to have the hand in the position of the first model sketch to the right. To use up more space I would extend the counter or table it was on across the canvas and show the knife there.

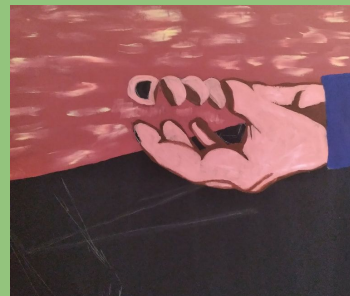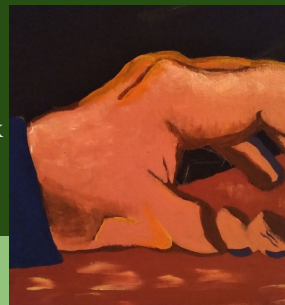*Sign 6* by Denis Sarazhin (2021)

Cutting My Finger Off

I took a photo as a reference to use to draw the hand for my piece. I noted the **shadows** on the chair it was on but I ended up manipulating them in the painting to look slightly different. The **highlights** and **shadows** on the hand, however, were going to be exaggerated in the painting with lines and **impressionistic** blending. I began the process by painting the entire canvas black. *Sign 6* has a dark **background** that I wanted to incorporate into my piece. Then I used a white pencil to sketch the hand. On the thumb, I drew the circular shapes of the cut up thumb. I tried to make it look like how it would appear if you chopped carrots or hotdogs up, with the pieces leaning back against each other.

Reference Photo, Sketch on Canvas, and Process Photo

Because the majority of my work was being done on the bottom half of the canvas, I would often flip it upside down so I could see it better. I don't have an easel so I was just propping it up against my bed and placing cardboard underneath. For the ground the hand was resting on, I used a red color that I mixed myself and loosely **blended** a very light yellow in with it. This resulted in a **texture** I have seen in several paintings before and it suggests a **textured** ground. When starting on the hand, I mixed a **base color** for everything (the nails, the sleeve, the skin, etc) and applied two coats without doing any blending. This way I had a secure **base color.** Then I added the **blending** colors and did the choppy **blending** technique I had practiced. I added in the details next. The last part of the painting I did was the counter with the knife on it. I painted it with the same **colors** and **blending** as the surface with the hand on it, and then I used the white pencil once again to sketch out the knife. I didn't use a reference for this because I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted. The knife is intentionally made to look flat and **unrealistic**. The purpose of this is to bring in another aspect of fantasy/strangeness; my piece is not meant to look **realistic.** Finally I did another coat of black in the areas that needed it because droplets of paint and smudges of white pencil had gotten on it during the process.

Process of adding depth to the hand using lines and color gradations

Self Portrait Covered In Blood

Edited Reference Photo

Untitled (Self Portrait With Blood) by Ana Mendieta (1973)

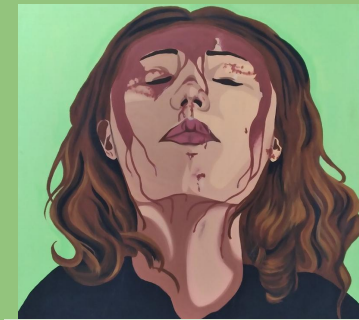*Self Portrait Covered In Blood* by Teresa Schmidt (2021)

From the beginning of my planning process, I knew I wanted to **manipulate** my face, meaning I wanted to add, take away, and/or change my appearance to give it meaning. I have used Ana Mendieta as inspiration before, so I was familiar with a lot of her work. I chose *Untitled (Self Portrait With Blood)* because I liked the roots the piece had to feminist art. I was also drawn to the use of blood as a way to give shape to my features. I took several photographs before deciding that this was the inspiration to use, mocking the subject of art pieces I was interested in. I liked the simplicity of the head tilted back in Mendieta's piece, so I recreated it as a sketch to get a feel for the proportions and such. Finally I edited the photo I had taken to match the **lighting** in Mendieta's. I added **contrast** and a yellow **hue**, and darkened it a little. Then I was ready to start on the painting.
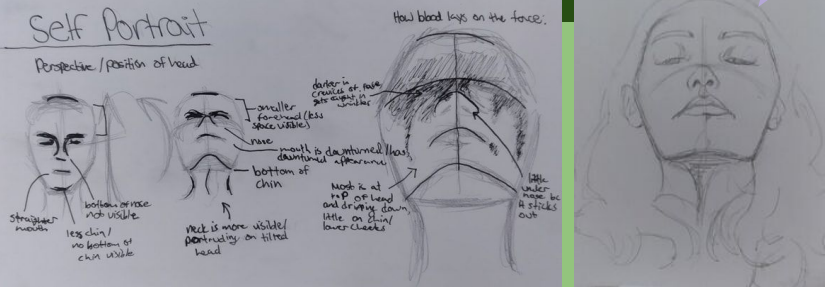
I **experimented** by using the photo I took of myself to create a sketch on paper as well as a plan to help me understand how to arrange the proportions of my face. I am used to drawing the human face from a front view, so I had to practice drawing it tilted up and study how the proportions would be different. I drew a face from the front view, and the tilted view next to it to compare the specific details, then I drew a bigger version of the tilted view and planned how the features and blood would look. This was all very important because this self portrait was going to be three feet by three feet, and proportions become more difficult to manage the bigger the canvas. So, I needed to develop a good understanding through numerous sketches beforehand. I also did research on Ana Mendieta's photo and sketched it out to make sure the details included in her piece were also included in mine.

Planning Photos and Experimental Sketch of Face

Studying Untitled (Self Portrait With Blood)
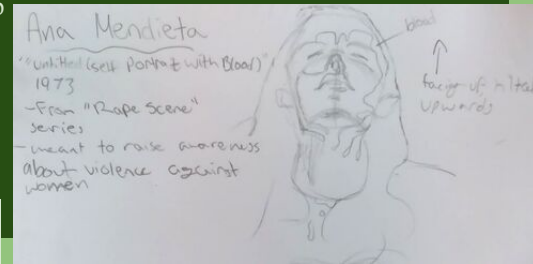
Self Portrait Covered In Blood

I began the process for painting this piece by mixing colors for the skin **tone** and **background.** I originally started with a yellow **background,** but I painted over it with the green color I made which I liked better. The hair and skin were several different **shades** in order to incorporate all of the colors. I **experimented** with many different colors directly on the canvas, and if I didn't like them, I would go over them. This helped me compare the colors directly to the painting. Because of all the **experimentation** I was doing, I mixed many colors together that I ended up barely using. It was all part of the process which eventually brought about my final piece.

Color Swatches and Process Photo

Developing the face and adding features

I sketched a general head and neck shape and then started laying base colors down. I wasn't doing much **shading** yet, and I also wasn't worried about the facial features, I planned to sketch them out over the **flesh color.** I ended up changing this **shape** a lot throughout the project to make it more proportionate, so it began as a guess-and-check sort of project. The most challenging part was getting the head **shape** right. Because it was such a large canvas, you have to make big changes in order to actually alter something. I'm used to smaller paintings and making small, quick changes, so I had to adjust and practice zooming out and stepping back to make sure my progress was proportionate to the whole piece. After laying down basic **shapes** and **colors** I was ready to start on the hair. I started here because I wanted to get a feel for **shading** on a large canvas, and I felt like I could mess up on the hair and fix it easier than I could fix up a mistake on the facial features. The hair was actually the most tedious part because there was so much shading that took place, I was also just starting to grow familiar with the canvas so everything took a little longer. I added the shadow color on the neck and shaded the shirt black. I didn't add much detail to it because I wanted the attention to stay on the face.

Self Portrait Covered In Blood

Next I added the facial features. I started with basic **shapes,** then mixed **colors** for **shading,** going from light to dark. I also blended the neck. When I stepped back to look at my progress I realized that a lot of things were off proportion, like the head shape and lip size. The shading on the left side of my face was choppy looking. I paused here to make a few quick changes and make everything more proportionate. I painted over the lips and re-made them to be longer. I also made them sit higher so the head looked more tilted, which was another thing I had wanted to fix. I fixed the head **shape,** and I ended up doing this again later on. I was mostly happy with the facial features, and noticed that I had taken on a **shading** style made up of hard shapes of slightly different **color,** giving the illusion of a smoothly shaded image.

Beginning process of facial features

I **shaded** the lips with brown and a reddish pink color I mixed using pink and brown. I stepped back again to look for things that were off proportion. I still wasn't happy with the head **shape,** and by making the lips bigger I realized that the head **shape** wasn't the whole problem, I had made the features too small overall. It didn't look alarmingly off, but it definitely wasn't realistic. Not willing to start over, I tweaked some things; making the eyebrows longer, adding **shading** to the nose, and making the eyes bigger.

Close up of blood on face

I mixed the **color** for the blood by combining brown, pink, black, and my own bright red paint. I was happy with the color turnout. I tried to lay out the blood around my face similarly to how Mendieta had it on hers, because I had no other reference. I also **shaped** it so it would **highlight** to form of my face; curving at the cheekbones, becoming thin at the end of my face, and dripping down my neck. I also added patches of semi-dried blood. I tried to make it look **asymmetrical,** which would be more realistic and bring an aspect of **realism** to my piece. Finally, I added **highlight colors** to the wet blood as well as the lips and eyelids, because they had particularly bright **highlights.**

Space

I knew from the start that I wanted to add something to my desk, and I decided to incorporate a project. I had been taking inspiration from **collages** I had seen around classrooms or on the internet, and I had also been practicing drawing eyes. I've been drawn to eyes since I started taking art seriously. I also **experimented** with eyes and emotions, which was a pillar to this project. I wanted to show a collage of emotion in one common object or thing, which was eyes. I sketched ideas for the kinds of eyes I would draw and the emotions they would portray, from closed lids to floating eyeballs. The main ideas I captured were sadness, gore, and mystical/abnormal eyes.

My inspiration was *The Blood of the World* by Rene Magritte. I've always found that my painting style somewhat relates to Magritte's method, especially in this project, because of the strong **colors** and **contrast.** This piece was made to show the raw parts of limbs, as if you had pulled back the skin and the veins and arteries were very prominent. *The Blood of the World* has a notably strong **contrast,** although some parts have a softer **gradation.** The parts are thrown together in a sort of messy collage. In my piece, I tried to bring in the aspect of a strong **contrast** in my piece, as well as the collage of raw emotion.
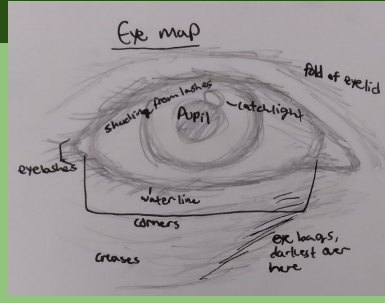
Map of parts of the eye
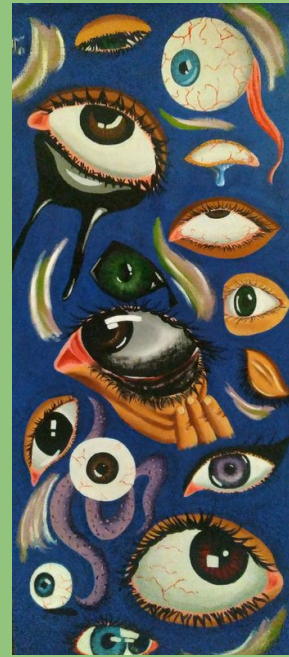
I started with a sketch of the eyes in white pencil over the **background**, which I painted a solid dark blue. This was to give the eyes a floating appearance to more accurately resemble a collage. The white pencil was a smart choice on my behalf because a regular pencil would have been too dark to see the sketch, and this basic outline was what helped me place the eyes to make a good **composition**. I started with white paint, which is unusual. It is usually best to start with dark shades, but for this piece I started with white because the whites of the eyes cover such a large area. Then I went over it again with gray shadows and red veins. I did the irises last because they would take the most concentration and precision, which I didn't want to mess up with one stroke of white paint.
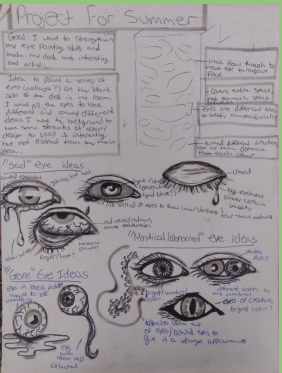
Planning and Process Photos

The Blood of the World by Rene Magritte (1925)

Sea of Eyes

Next I went in with some black to do darker **shadows,** like where the ink is spilled in the eye, in the black teardrops, and the dark irises. I also went in with a lot of pink for the waterlines and I mixed several **skin tones.** I tend to jump around in a lot of my art, especially large pieces like this. I would sometimes hyper focus on one eye instead of the painting as a whole. This didn't affect the final result too much, although it would sometimes affect my motivation or cause me to waste a lot of paint.

Developing the eyes (right)

One decision I had to make while working was where to cut off where the skin of the eye met the **background.** I didn't want the eyes to blend into each other, I wanted a sharp outline to make them pop. I chose different places to cut it off depending on the eye and the look I was going for. For the eye in the center with the ink poured into it, I showed a lot more skin around it to show it was being pulled down. Another challenge was the eyelashes, because I don't have very thin brushes. I had to either work very carefully with the brushes I had or use an ink marker. I went back and forth between the two; using paint for the bigger eyes and marker for the smaller ones. One technique I found helpful was painting big shapes in and then going back and blending to create **shades.** I did this a lot for the eyelid folds, in order to give both colors a steady **base.** At the very end, I added streaks of color in the more empty spaces to help the eye flow around the piece better and to cover space.
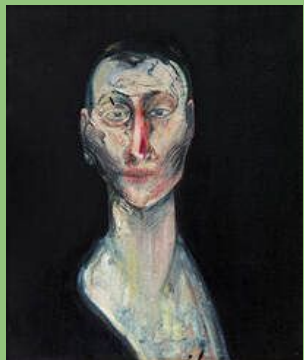
Beginning process
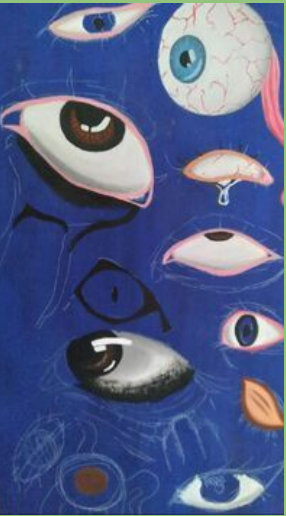
Underneath

My inspiration for my technique and style was Portrait of Lisa by Francis Bacon. Bacon has a unique painting style especially when it comes to portraits, and they often look distorted and **abstract.** This one stuck out to me because it was less **abstract** and more real, but it still had clear elements of his personal technique. The brushstrokes give it a clear **texture** and amplify the form; making the **angles** of the face, specifically the cheekbones, extremely prominent. The figure looks almost dead and grayish in some areas, but the pinker **hues** in the center bring life to it. The lips are merely a suggestion but the eyes are very clear and set. It appears as if some features were intentionally **distorted.** This portrait was not meant to look pretty or appealing to the eye, instead it is very raw and real, which is the quality I was looking for in my portrait. My second inspiration is the ruler of the underworld from Norse Mythology, Helheim or Hel. Hel is half human flesh and half skeleton, and she is known for her trickery and the pain she brought upon others. For my portrait, I was looking for a less **realistic** concept to apply to make my painting stand out. I chose the skull because I wanted to depict a darker side of myself, and I was intrigued upon learning that Hel also had a half skull face, so I incorporated her into my inspiration. She is often portrayed as blue in color, so I applied this aspect to my work.

Portrait of Lisa by Francis Bacon (1957)

Reference Photo

Underneath by Teresa Schmidt (2021)

The reference photo was taken several months before I started this project. I took it because I liked how tired I looked, with my makeup smudged and my sweatshirt hanging off my shoulder. It gave off the same vibes as the idea I wanted to incorporate into my project. It was also relatively forward facing and plain looking. I decided it would be a perfect reference for this project, so I sketched it out several times in my planning sketches to get used to the facial proportions and position of the head. The only thing I was unsure about was my hair, because I have dyed it red several times after this picture was taken, so I had to figure out how I was going to paint it.

Sketch of Portrait of Lisa by Francis Bacon (1957)

Planning Pages and Artist Notes

Underneath

For this project, I originally wanted the skin to look more naturally peeled back in some areas as a gory way to reveal the skeleton, but gore wasn't something I needed to reveal imperfection, and I didn't think it would show the right idea. I highlighted how I wanted there to be no blood/gore and how I would be draped in a sweatshirt and bare chested. This was meant to show the **rawness** of the piece and the vulnerability of the parts of myself I was showing in the piece. Bacon's style would be difficult to copy because I am always tempted to make my art look as **realistic** as possible. I practiced sketchy lines that would later be replicated in paint. I also considered how I was going to **distort** the figure to look more tired, dull, and dead. I planned to amplify eye bags and add **tones** of gray and green to the **color scheme**. I also planned a more downturned mouth to illustrate negative emotion. The eye and socket on the skeleton side of the piece would be veiny and wide to give a terrified or perplexed look to the art. One of my inspirations was the Norse goddess Hel, who is historically blue, so I would tint the bone structure this color.
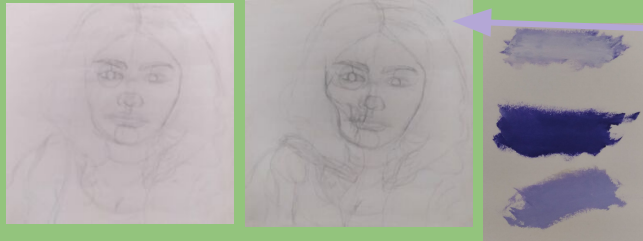
Planning Photos, Sketch on Canvas, Color Swatches

I lightly sketched out myself on the canvas using the reference photo. I drew in the dividing line between the skeleton and the flesh part of the portrait very lightly to mark where I was going to paint it in. I drew in my shirt and necklace as well, which were later erased and replaced with the skeleton of my shoulder and collarbone, as well as some of my ribcage. Because of my planning sketches, I got my proportions down pretty well the first time, and only had to adjust a few things later on. I went over the sketch again to darken some areas.

After adjusting some **proportions,** I added in more of the skull over the flesh I had originally drawn in. I drew the cheek in more and made it more angular to match what a skull would look like. Aside from skeleton pictures I found on the internet, I also would often look in a mirror and feel the bones under my skin to understand the shape and where the bones would be on my skeleton. I did the same thing for my shoulder and collarbone skeleton.

I started adding paint. I knew I would have to do many layers to get the natural colored **undertones** of the skin. I had learned this technique from an art class I took over the summer, and the skill carried on to be used in this piece. I used dark blue, because it is always best to start with darker and more saturated colors and **layer** lighter colors on top. I only used this colors in the darkest of **shadows,** and to **outline** set areas, the the divider between the flesh and the skeleton. Focusing on the skeleton side of the face to start with, I began **layering** lighter blues on top of the darker ones. I made this color by adding white to the dark blue. i got carried away with the eye, which I eventually had to go over to better match the other eye.
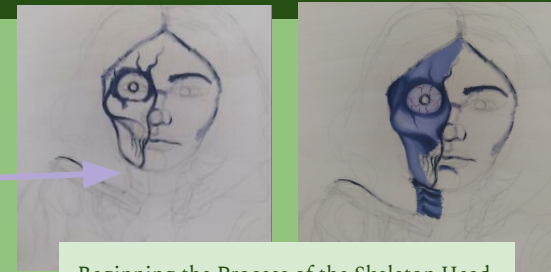
Beginning the Process of the Skeleton Head

Underneath

I was eventually **blending** straight white with the blue in the sharp **highlights** of the skull, like the cheekbone and parts of the forehead. I kept the cracks in the skull near the socket because they related to my imperfect **theme**. I also noticed what looked to be cracks in the skin of the figure in *Portrait of Lisa* by Bacon, which I thought was an interesting aspect to the piece. After finishing the skull for the most part, I moved on to the flesh side and began **layering** purple and blue in the darkest **shadows** of the skin. I wasn't afraid of bringing in bright colors because I knew I would be able to cover them with lighter ones and let the darker **tones** show from underneath. I also wanted to bring in the streaky aspect of Bacon's work into my own. He used less color in *Portrait of Lisa* than I did in *Underneath*, but this was intentional; I like working with **color** and I can still incorporate my inspiration into my piece if it has more **color**. On top of these **shadows** I added green areas to give the skin a sick and dead look. This brought an ugly, imperfect aspect into my face. I added small amounts of yellow to balance out the green. I admired how the **undertones** of green look in *Portrait of Lisa*, and how Bacon brought in streaks of yellow to balance it out, and I hoped to get a similar result with this technique.

I continued the process of **layering colors,** adding in yellow, pink, and eventually green. This resulted in very **saturated** and colorful skin, so I continued **toning** it down with light colors, even adding in some brown and tan paint. Eventually I got the color I wanted. I kept my lines streaky, but the **shading** still looked relatively smooth, but I didn't consider this a bad thing so I left it as it was.

I was unsure at first how I wanted to do the hair, because I have dyed my hair in the past and I didn't know which color I wanted to showcase for this piece. I started with dark brown for the **shadows** and the areas around my face since those were the darkest. When doing hair, I generally make **shapes** of different colors all throughout the head and then I blend it after I have all of the **colors** down. This works especially well for oil paints because it takes them way longer to dry. I added many **contrasting** colors of the same relative scheme. The purpose of this was to show the many colors that my hair has been throughout time, essentially bringing a timeline into my piece. Francis Bacon once said he wanted his work to look as if a person had passed through it. Bringing a timeline into my piece was my way of showing this in my work. I mixed white, purple, and brown into different **base colors** to make shapes of the hair color. I started at the root of the hair because it was more straight and easier to manage and experiment colors with. The curls got more complicated in shape, so it was better to have a feel for the colors I was going to use while doing them.
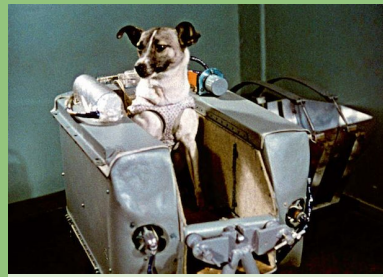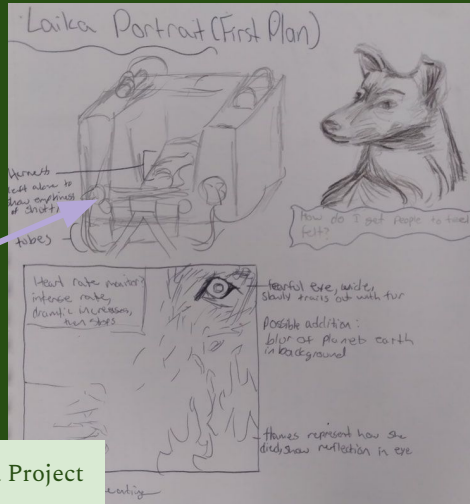

Process of developing the skin tone by layering

Laika

The Sputknik 2, with Laika inside

Laika by Teresa Schmidt (2021)

My planning for this project was all over the place. At first I was set on doing a painting, because paintings are what I'm comfortable and most skilled at doing. However, I realized a painting wouldn't be enough to capture what I wanted to show. I want the viewer to feel what Laika felt. I had planned to do a collage sort of painting with scattered images of Laika and what she was seeing and feeling while in space. I had even started painting it, beginning with flames in the bottom corner and a horror-struck eye. But as I was painting it I realized I wasn't feeling anything while making it, and I didn't want to keep going. So I changed my idea to focus not on Laika, but the absence of her. This is when I got the idea for the model. The space where Laika was seated in *Sputnik 2* was relatively open, so I could make it look empty without the dog in it. I wanted to depict the tragedy of Laika's story, so I decided I would have to portray that on the model and destroy it somehow, to make the viewer wonder what had happened.

To plan out this model I started by sketching pictures I had collected of Laika in the shuttle. I decided to use mostly cardboard because I am familiar with it. I am relatively inexperienced with sculpture making, so I wanted to use a material I knew how to **manipulate.** I studied the **structure** of the shuttle to ensure that I was making it correctly. I also decided to destroy it by starting a corner of it on fire, which I would have to **experiment** with to make sure I was doing it right, because I didn't want to burn the whole things.
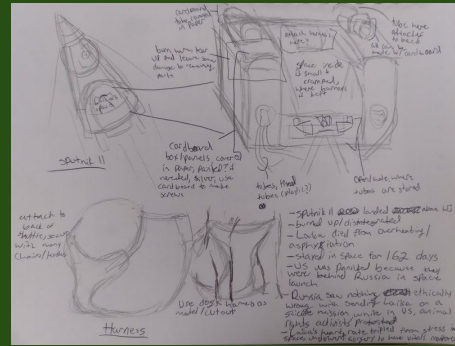

FIrst Plan for Laika Project

My inspiration is *Sputnik 2*, the shuttle that carried the dog Laika to orbit the earth in November of 1957. It was a somewhat competitive time, because the Soviets and the US were competing to be the most advanced country in space travel. This prevented the mission from being as cautious as it could have been, because they were on a time crunch. Laika was a stray dog picked up off of the streets of Russia, and therefore never had a family or knew love. She was launched into space with no room to move around in her shuttle, with a waste bag attached to her and gelatin she had been trained to eat. She had heart and blood monitors surgically implanted in her and her heart rate tripled in space due to the stress she was experiencing. She survived the launch, but after a few hours the heat control in the shuttle failed and she died a slow and lonely death. The Soviets didn't release the true cause of her death until much later, and everyone was under the impression that she had been euthanized in space, which had been the plan, because they hadn't come up with a way to have the shuttle return to earth.


Second Plan for Laika Project

Laika

The base of the model was cardboard. I started with a box that I cut a space out of which would serve as the space that Laika would've sat. I ended up making the space bigger to amplify the emptiness of the ship and the absence of Laika. To hold pieces together, I used hot glue, because it would not melt away or fall apart when I poured water on it after burning the finished product. I measured and cut cardboard to glue in place and box in the remaining top of the box. The result wasn't precise, but it didn't need to be - I would cover the whole **base layer** with construction paper later on.I rolled up cardboard strips and glued them together to make a strong base that would hold up the floor of the seat. I attached these to the bottom of folded cardboard pieces that measured to fit inside the perimeter of the seat. Next I glued a toilet paper roll to the top of the box to serve as an extended part of the shuttle. I began gluing gray cardstock around the model. This matched the gray **color** of the shuttle and would make it look more realistic. I also had border pieces that I painted silver and glued around the edges, to give the model a shiny look, which cannot be attained with paper alone. This was a way to give it a more artistic look while still representing the shine of the *Sputnik 2* shuttle.
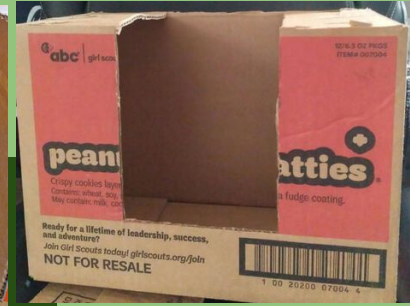
I covered the exterior of the box with gray cardstock. Cardstock is sturdier than construction paper, and also smoother in appearance, which would make it look more like metal and make it take longer to burn. I was originally going to use construction paper; I'm glad I decided against it. I attached the cardstock with hot glue. This was so it wouldn't dissolve like a glue stick would in water, and I knew it would get wet when I put out the fire when burning it. The *Sputnik 2* model has two holes on either side that hold important parts of the ship. I cut these holes into my model by using a toilet paper roll as a size reference. I traced the circle onto the model, and then i stabbed the center with a scissors and carefully cut the cardboard away to leave two holes. This was where I would put wires to stick out in every direction to give the project a technological aspect; because it was supposed to represent a man made ship.
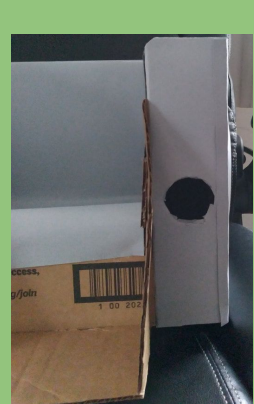
Process Photos, from creating the shape to covering it in paper and details

Laika

Now I had to focus on add-ons to the project to make it look as realistic as possible. One of them was borders around the model to make it look man made. On *Sputnik 2*, there are lines of metal where the pieces are screwed into place. Rather than adding screws, I replicated this by painting strips of cardboard silver and placing them **symmetrically** around the model. This gave it an artistic look, but kept it's intended form as a shuttle. There is a contraption on the front of the model that had the legs that make the shuttle able to stand up. Since my model is a box that already sits on the floor, I used leftover cardboard strips from the border to make short legs that where the box met the floor. I attached this contraption to two "knobs" made by cutting up a toilet paper roll, painting it silver, and gluing cardboard in it to prevent the circles from collapsing. I repeated this process with even smaller circles which I attached to the first circles. Unfortunately, this long process ended up not being with it, because I didn't like how unsupported the legs looked, so I removed them. Later, when I burned the piece, I ended up burning these pieces that I had worked so hard to make. Luckily this did not ruin the project in any way. I was stuck for a while on what I would use as the wires that woulds come out of the holes on either side, but the idea came to me when I noticed the paper handles on some gift bags I had laying around from my birthday. They were a good width and I could paint them black, so I removed them from the bags and painted them all to serve as black wires. I didn't attach these until after I finished burning the project, because I didn't want them all to catch on fire.

Burning the model would have to be done strategically. I was going to use matches, not realizing that this would be a terrible idea, because I wouldn't have much control over the match, but I was given a tip to use a lighter, which I found much more effective. The burning was something I could only try once, there was no going back after I had started. I had someone take pictures of me doing it and kept my hose on and nearby so I could put out any flames that got too harsh. I started in the upper left hand corner, because I didn't like how the paper looked there and I could afford to let it burn away. Using the lighter, I was able to neatly burn the edges of the project, but it was a slow process, so I got some napkins and placed them on the model, then burned those, because they would catch fire quicker. After a minute or two I had a small fire going, and I would occasionally get it to catch onto other napkins to put it on other places of the project. Nearly all of the work I put into the very front of the model burned away before I was able to put the fire out, but I was impressed with how the burned pieces covered in silver paint looked. They turned out looking like real metal. After I put the fire out, I let the project cool outside, but it was raining and the model was already soaked in hose water, so I brought it in to dry. After the burning, I only had a few finishing touches to add on. I glued in the wires, and I also used a combination of compressed charcoal and charred paper leftover from the fire to darken areas where the cardboard showed. This made it look more charred and like wreckage. I also **experimented** with hot glue on the edges of the border to look like melting metal. I painted the glue over with silver paint that matched the border. It ended up looking less realistic than I would've liked, but it also brought an aspect of creativity into the piece.
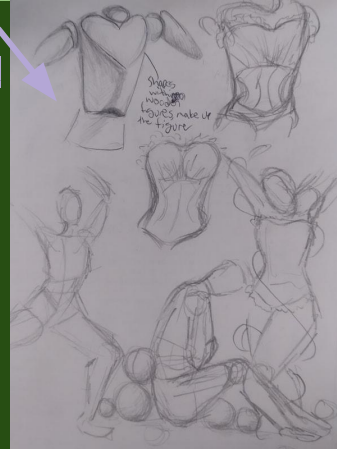

Creation of the "wires" (top), and starting the project on fire

A Chaotic Mind

This project incorporates different emotional states in the form of wooden figures. The objects and bold colors around them show chaos around the conflicting feelings. The figures are faceless, so that all of the emotion expressed is through their pose. Each figure is crying tears out of nonexistent eyes to show that the emotions expressed are generally negative.

A Chaotic Mind by Teresa Schmidt (2021) (right)
Planning Sketches (left)

I organized my ideas for this project into sketches, because they were disorganized in my head, so I made a habit of jotting down every idea I had for this project on paper. I originally wanted to incorporate my poetry into this piece, to give physical writing that related to the emotion of the figures. However, I thought it would be more powerful if the emotions of the figures weren't stated in words, and were more shown in the **pose** of the figure. After all, this was the entire point of using wooden faceless figures. I sketched ideas for three figures. One would be running, flinging its arms around wildly, with tears falling as it ran. The figure would appear to be dodging the pyramids surrounding it. The lack of space would create **tension** and **chaos**. The main emotion expressed with this figure is panic and mania. The second figure would appear to be weighed down. I sketched different ideas for how this could look. I decided on a sitting figure, stooped over and surrounded by spheres. This figure would portray depression and the feeling of being overwhelmed, due to being surrounded by heavy objects. The third figure is wearing a leotard and has a long piece of fabric draped and winding around its body. This figure displays a feeling of being trapped and forced into a mold. The leotard holds the body in a certain "mold" to convey this trapped feeling. The head is drooped down to show exhaustion in keeping up to this standard.

I used several references to get the proportions of my figures correct. I have a wooden figure of my own, but it is off proportion and the arms are way longer than they should be, so I could only use this as a general idea for the poses. I looked at Man Ray's works and sketched some of his figures, taking note of the ways he **shaded** them and used paint to show their form. Once I knew what poses I wanted, I took pictures of my wooden figure in those positions to use as a reference.

Pose References, Modeled by Wooden Figure.

Aline Et Valcour by Man Ray (1950) (left)
*Endgame* by Man Ray (1946) (right)

A Chaotic Mind

I painted the **background** of the canvas a simple turquoise color. I was going to **experiment** a lot on the canvas, so this wasn't a set **background,** and I knew I would likely go over it again at the end. Then I outlined the **shape** of the figures and placed them in a way that would give them space, but not enough to get rid of the composition's crowded feel. I mixed pale and tan colors together to get the base shade of the wood, and I filled in all of the figures completely with this shade. I didn't add any **lines** to tell one piece of the model from another, I just laid down the tone so I had a solid surface color to work off of. After boxing out these **shapes** in the **base color**, I made a medium dark **tone** by mixing stark brown paint into the base shade. I used this to add into the **shadows** of the figures. The figure in *Aline Et Valcour* is composed of stark shadows; some areas having no trace of the **base color**. I wanted to incorporate a similar **shading** technique into my piece, because it was what drew me to Man Ray's piece.

Then, I added **gradation** to the **shading** with the brown paint. I also outlined some places, especially on the running figure, because the chest is pointed out, and on the wooden figure, the chest has a lot of points and edges that can be accentuated with **lines** instead of **gradations.** There would also be many **shadows** under the head on the drooping head of the figure in the leotard. This idea came from studying *Aline Et Valcour* and noting how the sharp edges are suggested with **lines** rather than **gradation.**

It was after doing this that I took a step back from my piece and realized that some parts were off proportion. I got rid of both legs on the running figure by going over it in blue paint, which didn't match the **background**, but I was going to go over it again, so it didn't matter much. However, this mistake set back my progress by a lot and I found myself in a time crunch. I pushed through it, despite wanting to scrap the entire piece and start over, because I think the message of my piece is important, and by expressing chaos in my mind, I somewhat calmed it down.
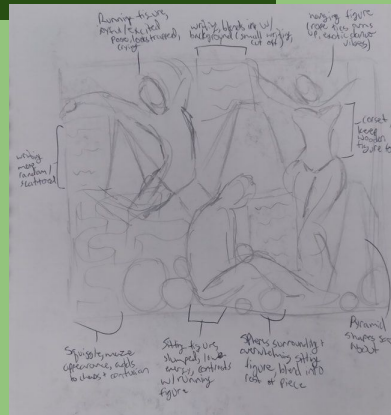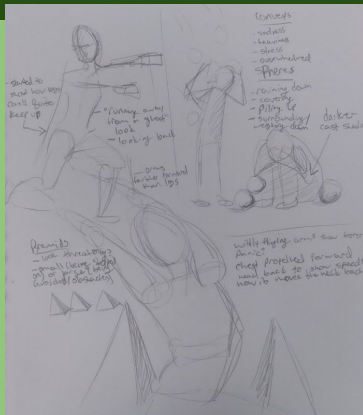
Process Photos, color swatches, and planning pages (right corner)

A Chaotic Mind

Painting progress before adding the fabric around the figure

I took my attention away from the figures and worked on other miscellaneous parts of the piece in no particular order of importance, as I often do when I am getting frustrated with my art. I painted one of the pyramids by using a base color green and then mixing a little bit of black with the same green to make a darker green for the face of the pyramid that is in shadow. Next, I jumped into working on the "maze" looking parts of the piece. These constructions look random, but they hold significance to me. I often doodle on my notes when I am stressed, anxious, or just bored. Over time, I've developed certain doodles that I repeat, and these constructions are one of them. The purpose of adding them to this piece is to reveal a small part of my mind to give it personal meaning, as well as to contribute to the chaos of the piece. The bright **color** and **form** of the flowing **lines** make the shape look intimidating and maze like, relating to spiraling of the mind (something that can happen when feeling anxious). Because I used a bright pink color for this figure, I made one of them on the left side of the piece and another on the left, to balance out the color so it didn't look uneven. I made the **shadow** color by mixing brown in with the pink, because black would be too intense.

Adding the fabric around the figure

I painted in the remaining pyramids, all different **colors.** They are all connected in the way they are all extremely **saturated** and how their **shadow colors** are made by adding black or brown into the **base color.** They are also all facing the same way. Next I worked on the spheres surrounding the seated figure. These were made to be scattered about and stacked on each other, appearing to defy gravity and giving an unrealistic feeling to the piece. I made these with different **shades** of gray, using a **gradation** for the **blending**. I mixed white and black with the gray to make the **gradation.** These geometrical **shapes** are inspired from Man Ray's *Endgame*. This piece features many stark **shapes,** with sharp edges and set boundaries. Like *A Chaotic Mind, Endgame* has little **space** and has an overwhelming feeling to it. The final step to the piece, besides touch ups, was the fabric wrapped around the figure in the leotard. I wanted the fabric to appear light and loose, and I was successful by adding gray **highlights.** I kept the **shading** of the fabric **abstract** to **contrast** the rest of the figure, and match the **shading** of the pyramids.

Sea of Eyes

The first step in planning was to gather a lot of pictures of eyes. Rather than finding these off the internet, I asked my friends to send me pictures or I took pictures in person. I tried to get a lot of different looking eyes in different positions; for example some were rounder, some were squinted, some were taken from the side, and some were taken from the front. Some were in **shadow,** and some had more **highlights**. I included two pictures of my own eyes as well. I enjoyed capturing emotion in the pictures of eyes, like happiness in smiling eyes.

Next I sketched out some of the eyes that would be more difficult to draw so that I could practice getting the proportions right. Th_ was crucial so they would look the best I could get them to look on the final piece. A lot of the eyes were in positions I had never drawn eyes in before, like the ones taken from above or below. I also needed to make sure the eyes had a very clear **structure,** which I fortunately know how to do because I've been drawing eyes for several years now. Finally I made a map of where each of the eyes were going to go. This map included circular objects that represented the eyes, labels of whose eye was who's, and a written color map of what **colors** were in the area surrounding each eye. The purpose of this was to make sure that skin **tones** wouldn't clash with the **colors** around it, since I would be **blending** all the skin together. I made the eyes different sizes and I also made some of the eyes tilted more to the left or right. All of this was to make the flow of the piece smooth and to enhance the unity between each of the eyes.

Eye references and planning

The Long Gloves by Mary Cassatt (1889)

Sea of Eyes by Teresa Schmidt (2021)

Eye Map and Experimentation Sketches

My inspiration is Mary Cassatt, who was an American painter who specialized in pastels. She often drew children and was especially skilled at faces. Cassatt's work stuck out to me because of the way she **layers** colors to give the skin depth. When using pastels for realistic work, it is important to **layer** different **colors,** otherwise it looks plain and flat. The best pastel artists have mastered this technique. I also admire Cassatt's use of **color,** especially the way she isn't afraid to use many different **colors** that wouldn't be seen on the surface level of skin (like blues, purples, etc).

Sea of Eyes

Starting the process, and the development of two eyes

Pastels are messy, so I had to also plan out where I wanted to start and how I was going to finish the piece with the least smudging possible. I am left handed, so I started in the bottom right corner. I focused all my attention on one eye at a time, rather than jumping around, to keep organized and to bring a unique look to each individual eye. The first eye I did was in the rightmost corner. I left this one mostly unfinished, because I knew that dust from the drawings above it would cover it and ruin the layer. I needed to save the topmost layer and details for after the piece was completed. This strategic approach is rare among my art, because I often dive in and work all over the place. But based on past experiences with pastels, strategic planning is of utmost importance. I developed a clear process for each eye quickly, and it can be seen clearly in the slideshow to the right with my friend Bunny's eye. I begin with dark brown and black **tone** around the eye shape and wherever there are dark **shadows.** Bunny's iris has green and blue **shades**, so I used a **saturated** olive green and light blue for this layer. Then, I do some **shading** on the waterline, and add in the pinks that are in the corners of the eyes. Then, I look for the **undertones** in the whites of the eye. To make it look most **realistic,** it is very important to know that the eye whites aren't purely white; they often have **undertones** of pink, yellow, blue, and gray (when in **shadow**). The eye references need to be studied carefully to see these **undertones**. I apply these **colors** on the first layer of the drawing. Once the entire eye is mapped out in **color,** all that is left is **blending.** I do this with a **base color** (in **shadow** areas, it is usually brown. For the eye whites, it is white, and for Bunny's eye, it was tan). I blend using a combination of **hatching** in **textured** areas and soft circular motions to make the drawing look smooth.

Process Photos and Close Ups of Finished Eyes

My friend Hamilton's eye was one of my favorites to draw, because the reference photo I took was from up, so you can see his eyebrow coming over the top of his eye. His eye and skin is very light, and lighter skin tends to have cooler **undertones** (because it is easier to see veins). The skin around the eye especially is very thin, so there are often prominent veins and patches of color. After blending the eye, I add the details that make it look real, and most of these are **highlights.** Since eyes have a layer of water over them, the light reflects off of them and there is a **catchlight**, as well as some **highlights** visible in the eye whites. In the corners of the eyes, there are often sharp **highlights** as well, do to the irregularly shaped muscles in the eye socket. As I got further along in the project, I started to **blend** the skin together to connect the eyes together. This showed the unity of the eyes and brought out the theme of the project. As I went along I found that the most **realistic** looking eyes did not have white eye whites, they were either a light gray or a beige color. I added in the veins of the eyes in pink or red depending on how prominent they were in the photo. Finally I added the eyelashes in. I ordered a thin pastel pencil to use for this, but it didn't come in time so I had to use my thick pastels carefully to make thin **lines.** For light eyelashes, I used brown pastel. For dark eyelashes, I used black and for eyelashes the light was reflecting off of I used white. I have a white chalk pencil that I used to ensure that the **lines** would be thin enough. I was able to work with the pastels to make thin **lines** by making soft, quick streaks. I think it would have looked better if I had used a pastel pencil, however.
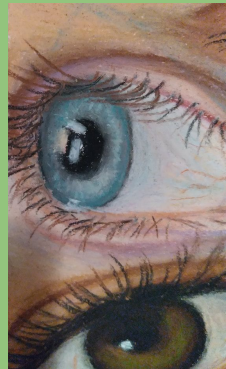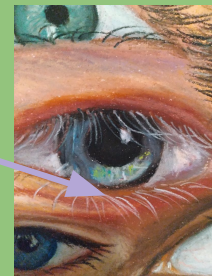
Fog

I planned for this project by sketching renaissance style female figures and studying how artists drew them at the time. The ideal figure had pale skin (this was a sign that they weren't a part of the working class), a full belly (a sign they were well fed) and small breasts. I took inspiration from famous renaissance paintings like *The Sirens and Ulysses* by William Etty. I then sharpened my focus to the painting I was using for inspiration; *La Nuit* by William Adolphe Bouguereau. I found this painting through my research on renaissance paintings of women. I was inspired by how wind is implied by how the figure is shielding her face and how the fabric billows out behind her. I **experimented** by sketching the **shape** of the figure three times; the first time focusing on the **outline** and general **shapes**, the second time focusing on the proportions and small details, and the third time focusing on the **shadows** and **shape** of the fabric.

Planning sketches, and the sketch of the figure on the canvas (farthest right)

*La Nuit* by William Adolphe Bouguereau (1883)

The first step in making this painting was sketching the figure. The rough sketch was slightly out of proportion, but I tweaked things as I layered the paint on. Having planned and **experimented** with the placement and the proportions of the figure in my sketchbook, sketching on the canvas was a lot easier because I had already practiced it. I drew in the fabric wrapped around the figure with a few **lines,** mainly where the fabric came into contact with the body. I also drew in **lines** to show the direction the folds of the fabric were going in. Next I went in with the paint, using a **layering** technique. I started using strong **colors**, like brown, pink, purple, yellow, and blue. Then I **layered** more neutral colors on top. This gave the skin a lot more **depth** and makes it look more **realistic.** Pale skinned people have somewhat transparent skin, which is why you can see veins through the wrists and pink from the blood inside the body. To make **realistic** looking skin, you need hints of the colors that are visible underneath the skin. I layered a flesh tone on top of the base colors, which I mixed with white, some pink, and brown.
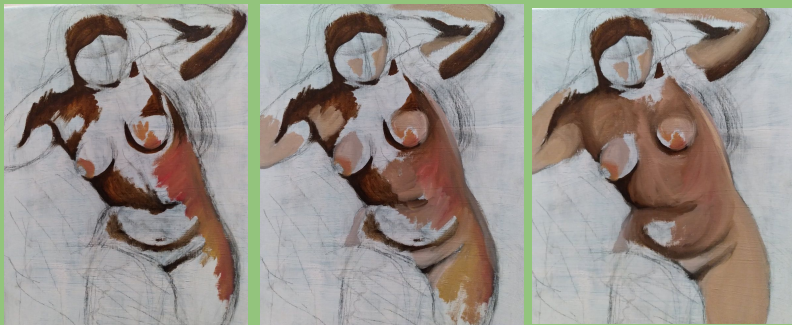
Fog by Teresa Schmidt (2022)
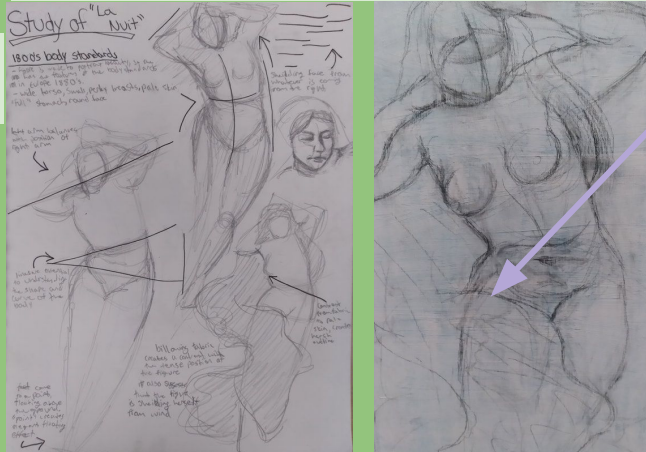
Fog

Developing skin tone

With the **colors** all laid down, the next step was to take advantage of the flexibility of oil paints and move the colors around to **blend.** I ended up using an **impressionistic** technique, in which I used quick dashes of **color** to make the **line** from one color to another more fuzzy, resulting in a smooth transition. I **layered** even more lighter colors on as I did this, and the **blending** become more **realistic** and **smooth.** As I was doing this, I also paid some attention to the fabric around the body. I mixed dark blue with black to get the base **tone** of the fabric, and lightened the blue with white for the **highlights.** Painting the fabric was very **experimental;** I ended up **blending** with longer **lines** rather than dashes to show the folds of the fabric and to give the effect of the wind blowing it back. I started with the **base color** and gradually **blended** in black for the darkest **shadows,** then **layered** the **highlights** on top.
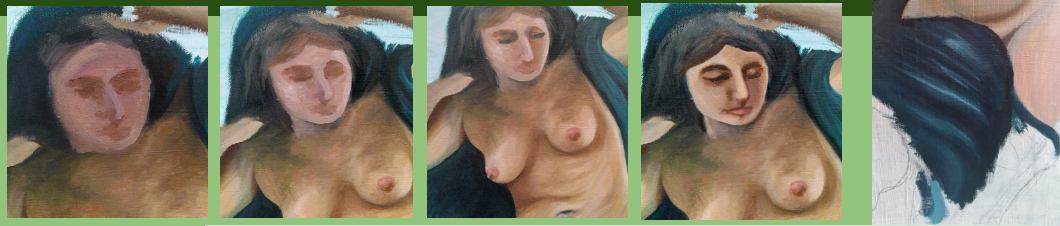
Development of the face and close up of the development of the fabric

Next I went in and worked on the details. My first focus was the breasts, because they were somewhat centered on the canvas and would be a strong **focal point.** Because of this, I wanted to make sure they looked very **realistic,** because it could affect the outcome of the entire piece. To **shade** the breasts, I used the dashes of color **shading** technique, but I made the dashes smaller and closer together to encompass the small space. I also **blended** a lot more white and pink on the breasts that I did in other places on the body. Another strong **focal point** is the face, because it is centered right at the top of the canvas. I used the same process I did for the skin for the face; starting with dark brown and pink and then **blending** lighter **tones.** I had to be extra careful that I didn't **blend** out the details too much, because faces create strong **shadows** and **highlights** due to all of the angles and indents. The right side of the face, for instance, had to remain significantly darker than the left side, and there needed to be a dark **shadow** following the **highlight** of the nose. The eye area is also very dark. I plotted the facial features with small **lines** at first, and then gradually added details once I knew they were in the right places.
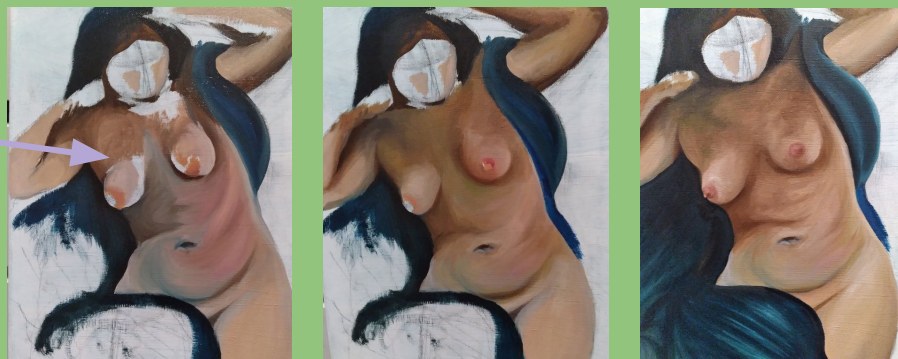
Adding blue, green, and pink hues to the skin tone

Fog
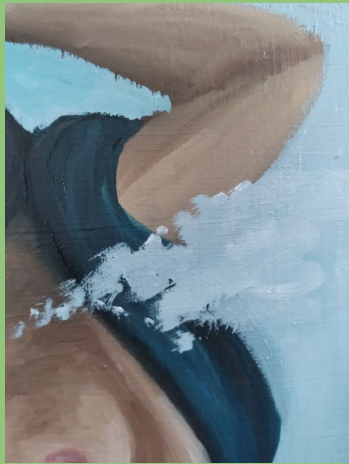
Laying down colors for the feet, close up of the blue fabric, and the process of creating the clouds

I painted in blocks of **color** for the feet and left them alone for a while, just so I knew where the **shadows** and **highlights** were and the general **shape** of them so that I could move on to the **background**. The **background** was a crucial step to the process, because it's what would differentiate the most from the inspiration. I layered the **background** with light blue and gray **tones**, and then **blended** with white to create the **texture** of clouds. I created rounded white **lines** with white paint, and **blended** them down to give the clouds a 3-dimensional look. I also added spots of darker gray in areas of the clouds. Some of the fog was in front of the body, and I used mostly white paint as a **base color** for this to cover up the dark **tones** of the fabric. I watered down the paint with oil to give the clouds crossing the body a somewhat transparent look.

Since my first oil painting, *Bee and Wildflowers,* I have improved significantly in my painting skills and use of oil paint. First of all, I've taken advantage of using linseed oil to make the paint less thick and able to move around better and cover more area. This alone improved the outcome of my work significantly. *Bee and Wildflowers* was one of my first paintings of nature, and it led me to explore painting other things in nature, like clouds, which resulted in the **realistic** clouds shown in *Fog.* I've also developed the skill of **layering** colors, which has given my work **depth** and enhanced the **realistic** aspect I wasn't able to achieve with *Bee and Wildflowers.* The paint is laid down so thickly in *Bee and Wildflowers* that the result is more **abstract shapes.** There is also little **shading** in the bee, so it appears very flat. *Fog,* however, has a **three dimensional** look because of the **gradation** of **hues.**

Fog by Teresa Schmidt (2022) (above)
Bee and Wildflowers by Teresa Schmidt (2020) (left)

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