

Proposal

Problem

A painting class I took Fall 2018 required students to create a mixed media piece for the final assignment. The subject of the assignment was free for the students to choose; all that was required was for it to be constructed with more than one medium (oil paint, pen, etc.) while still being considered a 2D painting (mediums raised half an inch from the canvas is an acceptable height to not be 3D). We also had to keep in mind that whatever we create, needed to be worthy of being shown in our portfolios, because the more variety of work within it, usually the better. Therefore I had to be very careful in choosing my mediums. I needed to be confident in my abilities with each medium I intended on using and be aware of how they will impact the other within the artwork. I took this as an opportunity to create a contextual self-portrait. Of course, portraits such as these are usually very complicated, and mine was no exception. Therefore, I was tasked with discovering the best way to effectively communicate what I've learned about myself in concise and understandable visual metaphors. I had a specific emotion that I wanted to portray visually. However, how was I supposed to do that without even having a verbal explanation of it first?

Objective

I was recently introduced to The Enneagram Institute by a friend. It was created with the purpose of providing a tool to aide in viewing ourselves and others objectively and deeply. It is very similar to Myers Brigs Personality assessment, however, the enneagram test attempts to explain instinctual motivations. It starts with one's *basic personality type*, each labeled by a number from 1 to 9. Then there's one's *Centers*: Instinctive, Feeling and Thinking Centers. Then there's one's *Wig*, which complements the basic personality type. Then there's *Development*. I appreciated this section the most because unlike Myers Brigs, it pinpoints areas of my personality that could be developed in order have healthier behaviors. Upon further research of the nine different personality types, I discovered that I most closely identify with the enneagram titled "The Peacemaker". A basic description of this personality is in its name; they will do almost anything to keep the peace whether it be within friend groups or within themselves. However, at the root of this personality, what they struggle with the most is generally not having a strong sense of their own identity. This concept impacted me in such a way that it was probably the catalyst for this project's concept.

Solution

What was intended to be a conceptual self-portrait, morphed and solidified into a visual representation of my testimony. Through the ideation process of this project, I discovered that what kept me feeling like I held substance in this world was Jesus all along. The knowledge that I am God's child keeps me from feeling like I could disappear any second. I visually described this particular theme by outlining my body and only painting a light wash of white through it to induce the look of transparency or invisibility. The only part of me that is painted realistically is where Jesus' hand is holding onto my arm. This exemplifies the concept that Jesus, through sanctification, is transforming me into my true self that holds substance. Jesus is also literally pulling me out of my comfort zone (the playing card). The playing card itself represents my

social status. Although my status is high within the game of cards (Queen), if I were to stay within my box, I would continue to submit to the rules of the game (mundane, predictable life). And although Jesus is offering me freedom, I still hold on to the things that hurt me because they are familiar (thorns).

Production

Enthralled by the title *Mixed Media*, I initially planned this painting to be a relief (slightly raised from the canvas) with the use of string and Paper Mache. The plan was to create a literal border between the illustration on the card and the white border where the suit is. Then use Paper Mache to create Jesus' arm reaching into the enclosed illustration to drag me out. However, since I was a beginner handling such materials, I was suggested not to use them for a final project and potential portfolio piece. Therefore, I decided to use acrylic paint, watercolors, ink and illustration board as my materials. Once I decided on a design and layout, I researched the processes of other artists using similar mediums and determined a plan of which sections of the piece I would complete first before others (roses, card boarder, and figure). I started with the roses within the main illustration. I sketched the roses directly on the illustration board, inked it with a brown micron pen (because it's waterproof), then water colored it. Then I used acrylic paint to create the card, the suit and the illusion of the card resting on another surface. Then I sketched the subject's figure on a separate paper and cut it out. Then I created an outline by tracing white pen around the cut-out onto the water colored roses. I researched which brands of ink functioned most efficiently on watercolor. Finally, I painted a light wash of white within the outlines of the subject's body, to further differentiate it from the background.