## Left brainstorm: "Change & Adaptation"

initial ideas brainstorm

Conflict of Old & New Ideas (Internal Change)
- clash between old & young generation
- old thoughts being abandoned
- dissagreement on social, political, economical, environmental, religious issue.

Urbanization (External Change)
- new technology lead to destruction of nature

Change in external environment leads to conflict in mind — shape individual's identity

revolution and development

(External change) Moving & Parting
- moving to a new environment
- Saying goodbye to family
- leaving one's comfort zone
- evoke loneliness & fear negative emotions (internal)
- moving to a new culture (different country?)
- Culture clash (external)
- learning new language

**Change &**

**Adaptation**

Globalization (External)
- Influence of more developed Country
- loss of Identity and local tradition

"A Touch of Green" by Taiwanese writer Pai Hsien-Yung from the book Taipei People (台北人)
the story of people who came from Mainland China (known as mainlanders) to Taiwan in the 1950s.
protagonist = Verdancy Chu, experienced death of her husband transform from an innocent teenager to someone who can make peace with dramatic change

Can people ever get used to constant change in the external environment? or will they become numb? can their mind be tranquill?

## Right brainstorm: "Emotional Detachment"

**Emotional Detachment** and numbness in feelings

Medium: unsure yet. maybe something with more texture — Acrylic? Color pencil? Photoshop?

figure's face? — intense light & strong contrast on figure's face?

strong contrast in lighting: bright in external environment but dark indoor.

相差大 我找倜借 (handwritten characters)

People become emotionally detach when they experience severe mental trauma
- talking about numbness in feelings
- why do people avoid forming emotions?
- what does these feelings remind them?
- are emotions associated with memory of the past?

emotional detachment forms isolation (character in an empty room)

Staging — Using physical barrier (window, wall, door) in a scene to seperate character from environment. Can show isolation & disconnection

Color use? black & white?

contrast between character's emotion (numbness) to events happening in the outside world

Powerless characters driven by outside forces:

"A Touch of Green" Pai Hsien-Yung — Taiwan in the 1940s   1882

reference works by Edward Hopper (1967)
- night hawks — Automat — New York Movie

Character sitting on a chair

### Topic: Numbness in Emotion

At the end I decided to expand upon the topic of Emotional Detachment, which refers to numbness in emotion associated with dramatic external changes. I want to discuss how people who experienced traumatic events can be caught up in agonizing memories. They never really recover and would deliberately avoid all forms of social relationship or emotional connections in the future. To emotional detached people, this is a form of defense mechanism, as developing feelings can trigger negative feelings and recall traumatic experiences. To others, emotional detached people might seems distant as they only connect with others for superficial matter. While they might be physically present, they are also mentally isolated from the society. I want to showcase this form of numbness through this piece.

### Developing Ideas

I am still not entirely sure of my specific subject and what medium or materials to use. I want the painting to have a realistic look (since it is discussing a serious mental issue) yet contain some dreamy, surreal elements to it (as emotional detachment is associated with intangible concepts: psychological disorder and memory). Perhaps I can achieve this effect through constructing a mysterious atmosphere and use dim lighting to hint character's detached mental state. Perhaps through isolating my characters from their surroundings to demonstrate their disconnection and solitude.

◄ DEVELOPING IDEAS, FINDING INSPIRATION FROM TAIWANESE HISTORY AND NOVEL.

▼ RESEARCHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF TAIWAN, AND ALSO INITIAL EXPERIMENTATION WITH PENCIL DRAWING. I LOOK AT OLD PHOTOGRAPHS TO FIND REFERENCE FOR CLOTHING AND HAIR STYLE BACK THEN.

# Taiwan In Its 1940s

## a period of conflict and struggle.

The idea of creating a peice about emotional numbing due to dramatic external change was very much inspired by the short story "A Touch of Green (一把青)" from the collection Taipei People (台北人) by Taiwanese writer Pai Hsien-Yung. The story discussed the life of an "innocent middle school bride transcends the death of her airforce pilot husband ... in the post-war Taiwan environment." (Modern Chinese literature center, 2008) After witnessing the death of her husband, the protagonist turns from a shy, immature teenager to a glamorous & attractive courtesan woman. Although she appears to overcome her trauma, the numbness in her emotion makes her unable to invest sincere feelings and form serious relationship anymore.

Her numbness is the product of constant conflict in Taiwanese society during the 1940s. It is because of the civil war between Kuomingtang (KMT) & Chinese Communist Party that cause instability in the society, leading to many tragedies in Chinese families.

I have long wanted to create something related to Taiwanese History because our identity was deeply entangled with the events in the past. As a Taiwanese, I feel like it is my mission to understand our history and to represent it through my artwork. Therefore in this peice I want to illustrate the story in "A Touch of Green" and focus on the mental state and the collective numbness of Taiwanese prevalent in the society during 1940s.

Because my work is touching upon a historical event I think it is important to be accurate with the background and time period. I decide to conduct a little research on the history of Taiwan (1940s.)

**DECIDING MY SUBJECT**

I decided to paint the end scene from *A Touch of Green* in my final work as I think the story it is a great representation of emotional numbness and it is also tied to Taiwanese history. I started conducting research on Taiwanese's' life after war and explored pencil drawing. I like how the use of shading makes figures look realistic and three dimensional. I find it interesting how a figure's clothing and hairstyle can reveal his or her personality, I want to incorporate this when I am depicting the protagonist from *A Touch of Green* in my work.



1969, post-war Taiwan. A highschool student in her graduation photo. I imagined this is how the protagonist looks like after she moved to Taiwan.

1945 Children beging for food during Communist Revolution

March 1946, KMT Soldier on Street

**1945-1949**
Due to communist revolution, KMT was expelled from the mainland and retreat to the island of Taiwan.

The story of "A Touch of Green" occured around this period. The protagonist moved to Taipei, Taiwan (external-change) after her husband died from plane crash in the KMT-communist civil war (traumatic experience).

The protagonist suffered from emotional detachment since then. She lives in a military dependent's village, which is provisional housing for KMT soldiers in Taiwan.

**1927-1936** 1st Chinese Civil War

**1945-1950** 2nd Chinese Civil War
Victory of Chinese Communist Party. Although major conflict ended, no peace treaty was signed. Therefore the two parties are still hostile against each other.

The protagonist's husband and lover should be wearing similar uniform.

Although I really like the smooth texture of pencil drawing, I think this style is too cartoonic. I want to paint with rougher texture and more realistic style.

I do like the cast shadow here and the use of intense value contrast.

眷村
44、5x5

ALL IMAGES ON THIS PAGE ARE MY OWN WORK

I think this one is too boring & does not look feminine enough. You couldn't really tell what she is doing from the silhouette, therefore this pose is not effective in communication.



These two are similar but I am more pleased with the second one. As her head was tilted more and it looks like she was looking out of a window. I like how her hand was placed naturally on her knee here.

I think this is one of the most successful pose. I like how her legs overlaps and one went beneath the table. I also like how her sholders are slightly tilted, I think this make the pose more feminine & natural. However I think her hands was serving no purpose here.

I've selected this pose to develop upon at the end. I don't intend the final pose to look exactly like this, but I want to keep her tilting head, inclining shoulder and resting legs. I would want her torso to face the audience a bit more.

▼ **SKETCHING** FROM PHOTOGRAPH



**DESIGN REFERENCE**
▼
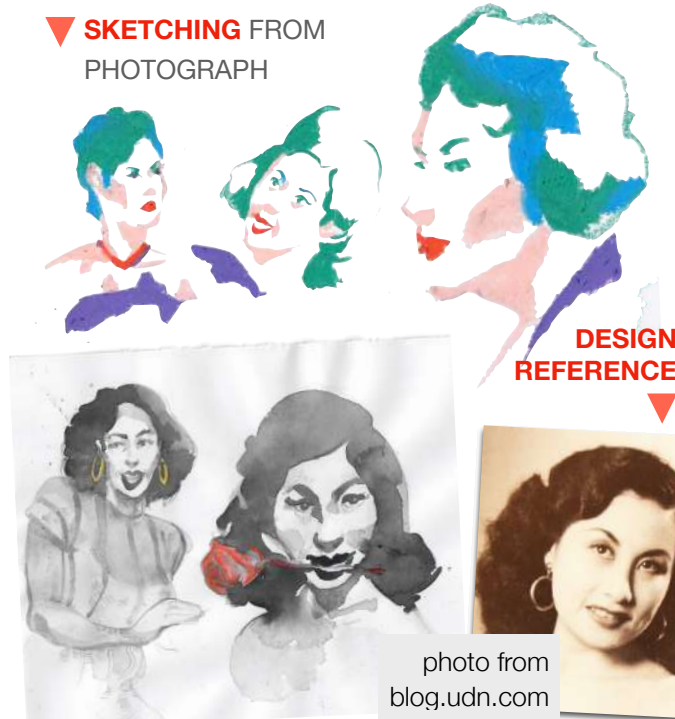


photo from blog.udn.com

Analyzing poses in these 20 minutes drawing.
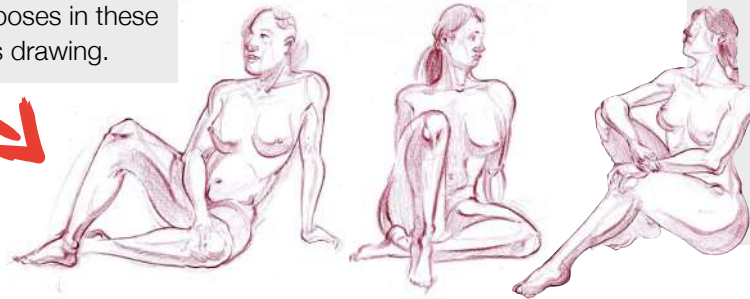


Beside planning poses, I also sketches with oil pastel and ink in an attempt to figure out a look for the protagonist. I reference the photo of Bai Guang, a famous Chinese singer in the 1940s known for her seductive and flirtatious character, while I was designing my character. I want to portray the protagonist as someone who (at the outside) seems completely careless about her tragic and dramatic past, and I think Bai Guang's image fits this character very well.

Oil pastel gives a very smooth and flat texture, almost like acrylic paint. Ink also have a smooth texture since it is water based, yet it can create gradient between shades. Although the watercolor stains effect achieve through bleeding and the simplistic look of oil pastel gave the drawings a unique character, I don't think this style will work well with the context and background of the painting. These drawings did help me get an idea of how the character should looks like in the final painting.

I worked with color pencil attempting to understand the anatomy of the posture and trying to make the poses look natural here. I realized that showing the "line of action" in the body's movement is crucial to demonstrate its force. It gives "lives" to the poses.

**Thumbnail #1**

- clouds on the sky mixing with smoke from engine fire
- Tilting horizon suggesting a sense of imbalance & serves as guiding line pointing to the P-51
- Characters laughing as the plane fall
  - I think this represents how people can be numb to their surroundings even if tragedy / disaster happens to them.
- P-51 mustang engine faliure

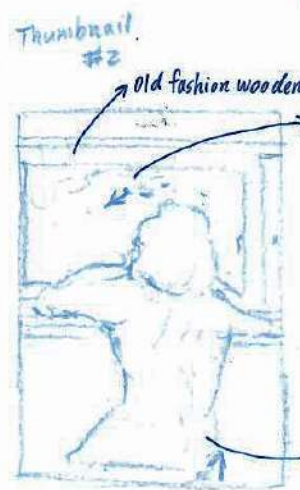I want to contrast the emotion of the figures to the tragedy that is happening in the scene.

**Thumbnail #2**

- Old fashion wooden window
- One P-51 crushing to the ground in distance

I like how the window seperate the character from outside environment as it symbolize how she is detached from external world and numbs towards everything.

however I don't think her posture conveys her emotion enough in this one.

it loss the juxtaposition between her numbness and the tragedy happening in front of her.

- Character stareing out of the window

I would probably keeps the idea of the window but change the composition & staging a little bit.

**Thumbnail #3**

- Plane crash in distance
- View out of a window
- The light produced by the fire flashing onto her face
- close up of the character to emphasize her emotion

I want a strong contrast of light & dark to show

This one shows the emotion of the character better as her face is showing

however I think the composition is too focused onto her face & does not work so well

I want to put a whole figure into the scene rather then just a face.

**Thumbnail #4**

- Window frames ~~back litted~~ backlit
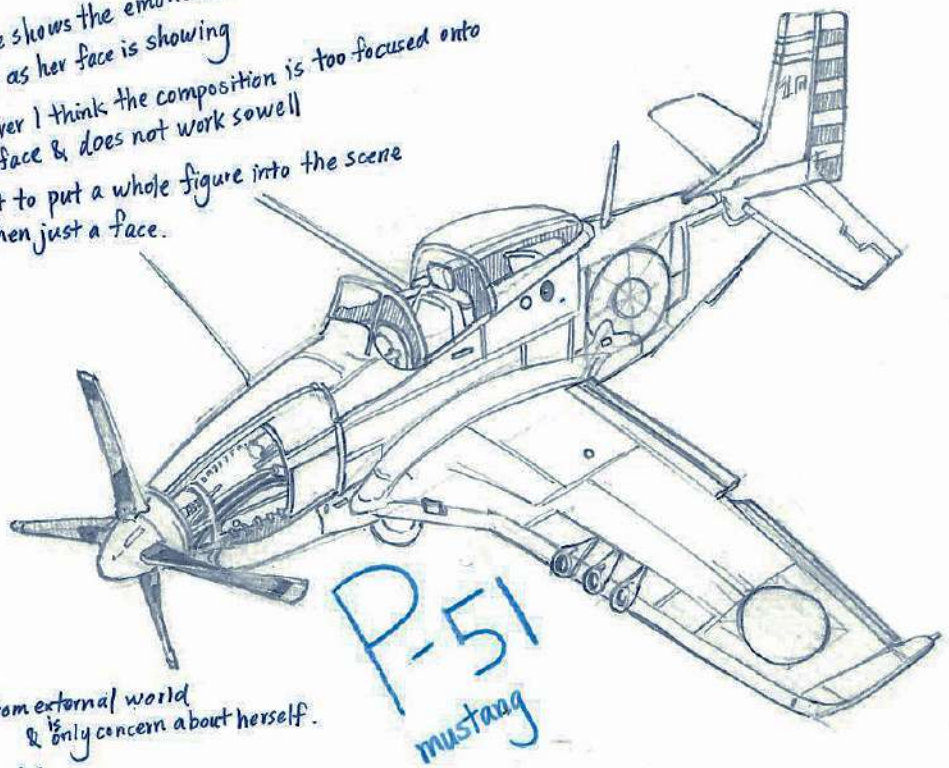
This thumbnail incoorporate elements from #2 and #3.

I think I am most satisfied with this one out of the four as it puts the emphasis on the reaction of the character to the accident; rather then drawing audiences' attention to the planes on fire (like what happened in #1).

I still need to think more about the posture of the character more to show that she is completely detatched from external world & is only concern about herself.

and also adding some hints into the surroundings that could suggest the time / location / background that my painting is depicting

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I went with thumbnail #4 at the end as I think #3 is too closed up to the character's face and I would like to fit more details of the environment into the frame. While in #1 and #2 the character's expression were blocked. #4 fits my intention the most. I planned to use the contrast of lighting to emphasize the tension and add dramatic effect to the scene. I also like the use of windows and walls as an imagery here. The way that it is placed between the character and the environment represents her mind was numb and separated from the reality.

◀ **DESIGNING** THE COMPOSITION OF THE FINAL PAINTING. I WANT TO ACHIEVE A CINEMATIC AND DRAMATIC LOOK, ALMOST LIKE IT IS OUT OF A 90s MOVIE.

▼ **P-51 MUSTANG** SERVES AS A HISTORICAL REFERENCE IN MY WORK, IT IS THE EXACT FIGHTER THAT IS USED BY CHINESE GOVERNMENT IN 1900s.

P-51 mustang

@ Rashomon

longitudinal line of figures     Limited (flat on left, deep on right)     @ SEVEN SAMURAI

@ Devils On The Doorstep

我是你临冠！

@ Billy Lynn's Long Half Time Walk.

@ Amélie

ALL IMAGES ABOVE ARE MY OWN WORK

# ARTIST INVESTIGATION **AKIRA KUROSAWA**

Out of all movies I am particularly inspired by Japanese director Akira Kurosawa's works. Kurosawa has produced a total of 30 films throughout his career. I recreate scenes from two of his films—Rashomon and Seven Samurai—attempting to understand how he staged the characters.

Since he worked with black and white film, he cleverly staged the scene and controlled the lighting so that there is always a clear division between the characters and the background. I also like how he makes use of positive and negative shape—sometimes the empty space behind a character suggest his / her emotion.

For example, in these scenes from Rashomon, the characters were put to trial. Big, empty space was kept around them to emphasize their helplessness. Also, other objects in the scene were all moved to the back or the side; this allows the audiences to focus on the main character in the foreground and strengthen their emotions. The distances between the character and other figures in the scene also implied their estrangement. The characters were covered by foreground shadows, which perhaps indicates they were in trouble.



Rashomon. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Perf. Takashi Shimura, Minoru Chiaki, and Toshiro Mifune. Film. RKO Radio Pictures, 1951.

I rendered this scene with three shades of grey using markers (See experimentation, first row). By copying this scene with only three shades, I was able to explore how Kurosawa uses lighting to create the sense depth despite the background appears flat due to the lack of orthogonal lines pointing to the vanishing point.

I think this scene appeals to me especially because the character is lit from the side, which helps to define the bone structure and texture of its face. It also helps to make the emotion more dramatic. The characters were facing directly to the camera. This composition makes it seems as if the characters were talking to the viewers and confessing their emotions. However, I do not want to depict my character and impact my audience this way; I want my character looks like she is immerse in her own thought. Therefore, instead of facing the front, my character will be looking away from the viewer.

# EXPERIMENTATION WITH ACRYLIC



THIS IS MY OWN WORK ④

To try out different materials and mediums, I tried to paint street view outside of my house with acrylic. At first, I colored the paper with saturated, light blue. I decided to create a gradient of blues by controlling the amount of water in the paint. However, I don't think it works out as different shades of blue does not blend well together. As a result, the gradient does not look natural. I go on to add buildings to the foreground, using large brushes to define the shape of each object first. At this stage, I realize acrylic looks better in a flat style, where textures were reduced to large areas of identical color and tone. This technique is often employed by David Hockney, an English painter known for his influence in the pop art movement. As one can observe in his artwork Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures), the tile on the floor and the layers of mountains in the back were all reduced to basic shapes and painted with flat color. However, after applying a large area of flat color, I found it hard to add detail (for example the shadows between the tiles) as it will immediately become the center of focus. In the end, I only add details to the left part of the scene as it is closest to the viewers in terms of perspective. I am satisfied with how the final piece turned out. I like how the blue undertone adds a blue hue to the scene and make the color looks more unified and harmonious. However, I think I could have paint on a larger piece of paper or canvas to depict the details more accurately. Because of the restriction of the size, I was not able to add many details (such as shadows on the ground and patterns on the wall). This makes the final piece looks unfinished.

▲ **PAINTING PROCESS** STAGE 1: SETTING DOWN THE BLUE UNDERTONE AND TESTING OUT DIFFERENT COLOR PALLET ON PAPER. STAGE 2: CHANGING THE TONE OF THE SKY TO LIGHTER BLUE, STARTS TO LAY DOWN THE BASIC SHAPES AND TONE FOR THE BUILDING IN THE FOREGROUND. STAGE 3: ADDING MORE DETAILS. STAGE 4: FINAL WORK.

I think the scenery of the street is quite amusing with the signs written in Chinese letter and scooters since these elements represent Taiwanese culture. I wanted to include something similar in my final painting to show the viewers the context and background of my work.

▼ **PHOTO** I'VE TAKEN AS REFERENCE FOR THE ACRYLIC PAINTING.



Although David Hockney also uses a flat style, he is able to incorporate many details into his work. As one can see, Hockney is very attentive when he painted the face of the figure, so it pops out from the background and looks three-dimensional. Moreover, he uses different hues of greens to illustrate the trees in the background to give the painting some more textures. Though the viewers can see many details on the tree when they observe closely, the background blends into a block of green when viewers look at the painting from further away. Hockney achieved this effect by working on a large canvas. This piece is seven by ten feet, which offers him enough space to paint with great attention to details. However, since I worked on a small piece of paper, I could not add as many details into my artwork. Therefore, my painting looks completed from far away, yet if someone sees in details, they could spot many flaws. Although I like the simplicity of this flat style, it is not what I want to achieve in my work inspired by Taiwanese history. Since my subject is based on real-life events, I want my final piece to looks realistic, almost like a shot from a black and white movie. To create this look, I have to paint with details to add texture and depth into the scene. Therefore, this flat style does not suit my purpose. I do learn to work on larger scales from this experimentation so there would be enough room for details.
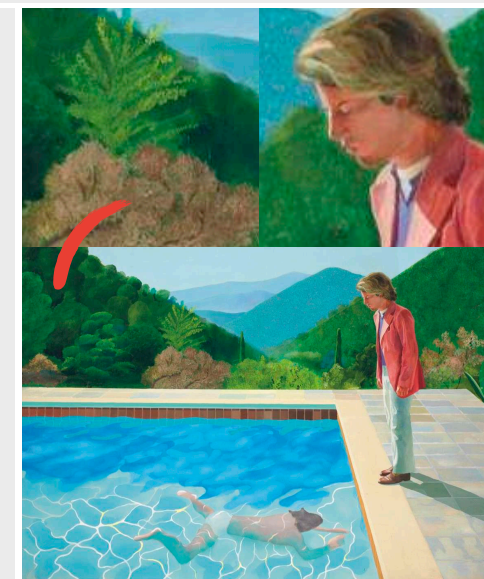


Hocney, David. Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures). 1972.

ARTIST INVESTIGATION
**DAVID HOCNEY**

# EXHIBITION PIECE 1 PROCESS: **DIGITAL PAINTING**

I was inspired by Akira Kurosawa to work in black and white that emphasize the contrast between lights and shadows. I think painting digitally with Photoshop might be the best option since I could adjust the size and resolution of the image freely according to my need. The built-in Zoom tool in Photoshop is also extremely helpful when I need to enlarge the image to paint details. In the process, I do encounter several obstacles trying to create textures and make the lighting looks realistic. Since Photoshop offers a wide range of brushes for users to choose, I was not sure which one is suitable. I ended up trying out dozens of brushes to find one that has a rough texture and can mimic the effect of a real brush.



Majong table, photo from www.xiugei.com

Old window, photo from gogohsu.blogspot.com

I started by making line drawing of the background based on the composition thumbnail. I used this brush that copy the texture of a pencil to make the lines look less mechanic. I looked up photos of Chinese furnitures for references to suggest the time period and background that this painting is depicting. Specifically, I sketched windows with traditional Chinese pattern and a Majong table. Majong is a game popular among Chinese people since the Qing dynasty and has appear in the book *Taipei People* multiple time, therefore I decided to add it in my work as an allusion to the book.

At first I painted without a tablet attached using a round, basic brush. This result in a very dull and still figure, as there is no blending between different shade. Painting with no tablet also means there is no pen pressure. Therefore, the shape and opacity of the brush remains the same in one stroke, while in reality the opacity can be controlled by the strength of the hand. As a result, the painting created with the round brush is unrealistic. Even though this brush does not fit my needs, it does serves well as a draft that I can based the final rendering on. I decided to use this brush to plan the general division of lights and shadows, then add in textures and details later on with another brush.
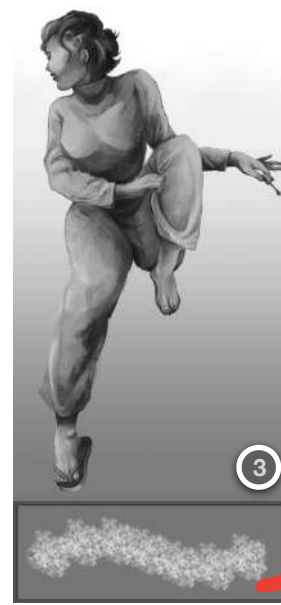
I colored the character in grey scale with the tablet connected, which allows me to control the pen pressure. The coloring in this version has improved significantly as the transition between different tones could be smoothed out. I also switch between two different brushes that have more texture. I think this adds more details to the fabric and makes the creases on the cloth look more natural.

When I am coloring the background, separated the process into three steps. First, I used the round brush to define the outline for each object. For example for this table above, I filled in a solid shade of grey first then lock the layer (a useful feature in Photoshop), so I would not paint over the line drawing. Then, I will add a gradient to determine the light source. Here, each plane on the objects needs to be separated into different shades of grey. Finally, I add in the highlight and cast shadows from surrounding objects.

I think my final piece came out successfully and resolved. I could have added in more details outdoor, instead of just using a gradient to represent the shade of sky. Right now it still looks relatively empty if compared to the foreground. I have tried to paint layers of clouds to fill in the negative shape created by the window. If the tone of the cloud is too dark, it steals some focus off the foreground. If it's too light, it would blend into the gradient in the background and does not look realistic. I would also like if the contrast on the crashing plane is greater or have a darker outline around it so that the viewers could identify it right away. Perhaps by adding saturated, pure color as highlights would draw viewers' attention to it and make the scene more impactful, yet that would also add unrealistic elements to it, which is against my purpose. Viewers would think the scene has been retouched rather than a snapshot from real life.

I could have played with details that sent subtle messages throughout the scene more. At this moment I have the clothes stand, mahjong table, photo frames, and the planes outdoor to hint the time period and background that this piece is based upon. For example, the logo of the sun in one of the photo frame refers to The Kuomintang (KMT), which is the political party that governs Taiwan during the 1940s. However, I think only those who are very familiar with Taiwanese history would have noticed the meaning behind these visuals. One also has to zoom in closely to see the pattern on the plane, which references the design of P-51 Mustang, a fighter used by KMT in its war with the Chinese communist party. I doubt that most of the time these messages will go unnoticed, especially if this piece is shown to a foreign audience that does not understand the context. This would have reduced the emotional impact and meaning of this piece significantly.
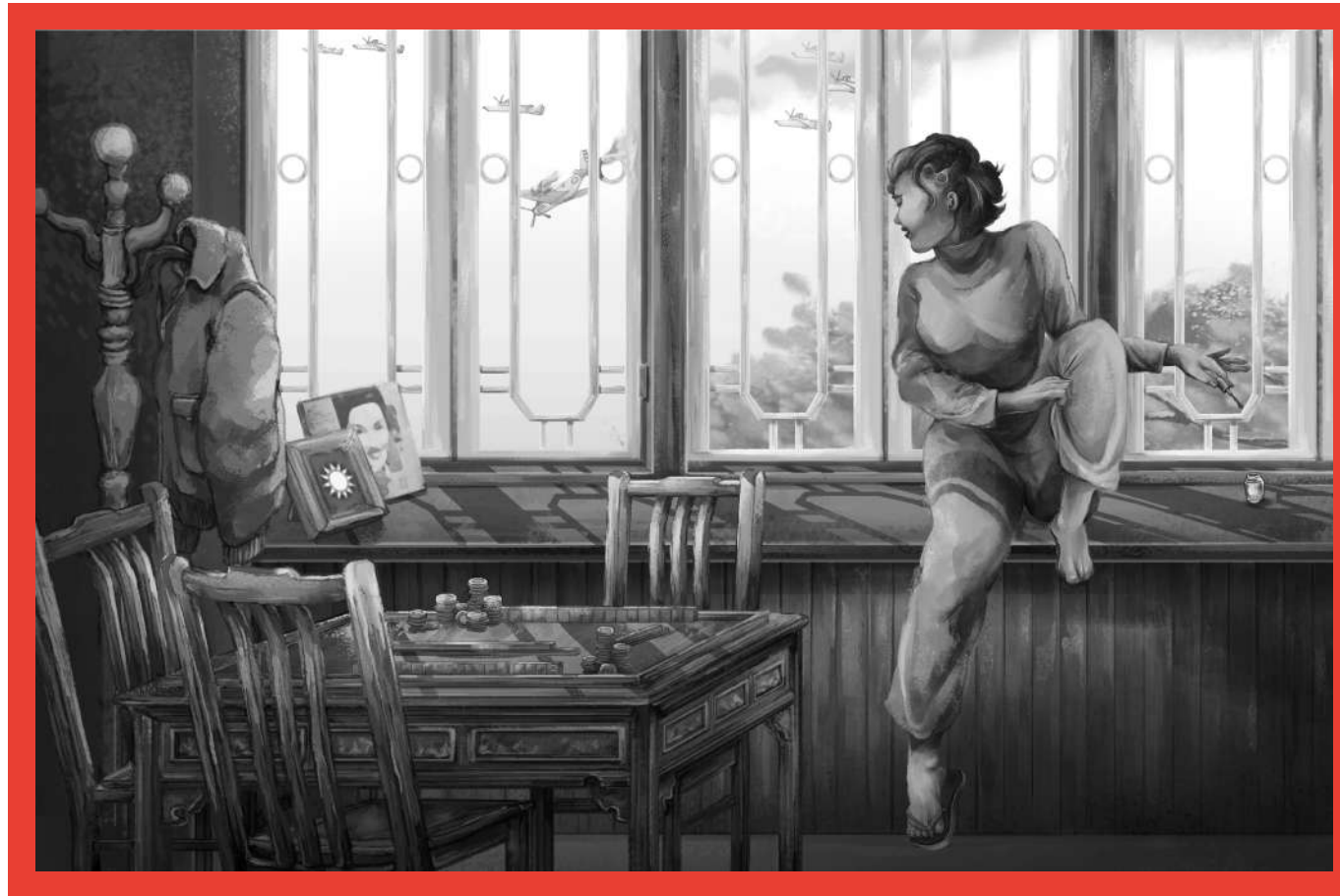


▲ **EXHIBITION PIECE 1** *A TOUCH OF GREEN*, 2018. DIGITAL.

In several parts of the painting, it is difficult to differentiate the figure from the background since the tone is too similar. For example, it is hard to tell the gesture of the character's hand without zooming in. I could add intenser highlights on the back of the hand to emphasize its form more or darken the background to the right; both ways would have distinguished the figure more.

If I were to repaint this piece, I would like to experiment further with the composition, especially in the background part of the scene. I could also take more risk and experiment more with the leaves of the tree behind the window. I think refining the shape and increasing the contrast will make it more realistic.

**REFLECTIONS**

I am satisfied with how the lighting works out in the final work. I wanted to experiment with lights and shadows for a long time. However, I often avoid painting with dramatic lighting and strong contrast as I think I lack the skills to carry it out. Through the painting process, I am more familiar with the numerous features of Photoshop and uses them to create texture or construct the mood in the scene successfully. I enjoy painting the cast shadows of the window frame since it has to be painted according to the perspective. When the shadows cast upon circular objects, such as the leg of the figure, its shape will be modified according to its form. Therefore, drawing cast shadows accurately adds three dimensionality to the drawing and makes the form of the character and other objects more natural and believable.

Death is another topic that I want to touch upon in my exhibition. It is related to the theme of change as death often come so suddenly, taking people's life without any notice. I think I can explore this topic from two approaches, one being the state of mind of someone facing death, another being the emotion of someone overcoming the death of a loved one. Either way, I aimed to communicate their sorrow and shock through my artwork, showing how death play as an inevitable to people's life and identity.



▲ **THE FACE OF AIDS**
THERESE FRARE, 1990. PHOTO TAKEN FROM TIME.COM

MY ATTEMPT TO ILLUSTRATE HUMAN'S BONE STRUCTURE, UPPER BODY

▼ **STUDY ON HUMAN ANATOMY**



This photo taken by journalism student Therese Frare was what inspired me to discuss death in my works. It captures the moment where AIDS patient David Kirby was laying in a hospital bed, surrounded by his family members knowing he will soon pass away. In 1990, AIDS is still a fatal epidemic and the top cause of death for middle age men in U.S. This photo is particularly impactful because of how the face of the man and the posture of his father resembled the imagery of Mary holding Jesus after his death. I think it effectively communicates how death does not discriminate and could affect anyone. The left part of the image can also form a circular composition with the father and the arm in black encircling the dying man. It demonstrated the intimate love between the man and his family. This had inspired me to create something similar in terms of composition.
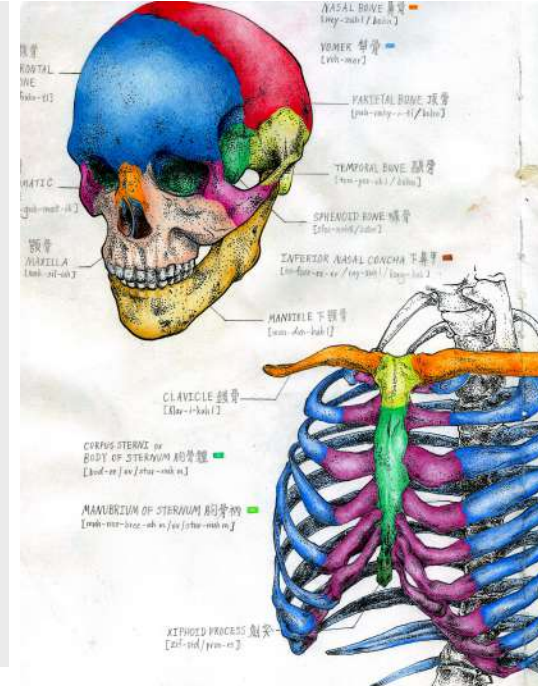
At this stage, I am still unsure about what style my piece would take. It will either be realistic, like my last piece, which I think will show the severity of death and fatal epidemics, or take on a more expressionist style, which will show the extreme emotion of people facing death in a more impactful way. Since I already did a digital artwork with a realistic style, I am more interested in exploring expressionism and demonstrating strong emotion in my artwork. Some artists that I will like to investigate include Egon Schiele, Chaim Soutine, and Ernst Barlach. I think it is fascinating how all three artist present human figures in their works.

As my art is aiming to stress the vulnerability of the dying person, I want to draw a very slim figure with slender limbs and protruding sternum. I also get this idea from The Face of AIDS photograph, where the patient is suffering from severe weight loss and muscle weakness. Painting a limb figure could communicate the idea of illness and death.

To illustrate the bone structure and muscle composition accurately, I drew these studies of human anatomy. I referenced photos of the human skeleton and tried to identify where the muscles were attached to. I drew the line drawing using marker first and marked each bone with different colors using color pencils. The illusion of shades on the drawing is created through painting with small dots. Controlling the spacing between dots could build a lighter or darker shade. This drawing served as a great reference when I am painting my final work. As human bones have many areas of protrusion and depression, it will also affect how the human body looks on the outside, especially on a slim figure that I will be painting.

Egon Schiele is an Australian painter of the 20th century. He is known for painting nude figures and self-portrait. However, what differentiates him from other portrait painters is his expressive line works and expressionist style. The figures in his painting often have elongated limbs and curving body, which created a very iconic style. Schiele was influenced by his mentor, Gustav Klimt, in the subject of his paintings. Both artists' works explored sexuality and contained erotic images. Moreover, they both depict the human figure with a mix of abstract and semi-realistic style. Schiele distinguishes from Klimt in the use of color. As one can see in this portrait to the left, the skin color of figures in Schiele's work often has a green tint, while warmer and more saturated color only appears on joints and facial features to highlight the bone structure. The tint in skin color often suggests a feeling of illness in Schiele's works and makes his subjects seems grotesque to the viewers. Moreover, the artist uses dark outline to emphasize the figure's muscles, though his portrayal of the human body is often exaggerated: Schiele would change the proportion of limbs and enhance features such as collarbone and knuckles. With the contortion of the body and elongation of the limbs. Schiele added surreal elements to his art.

## ARTIST INVESTIGATION
# EGON SCHIELE

### EXPRESSIONISM

Schiele is part of the expressionist movement, which is characterized by artists deliberately distorting the reality in their works to convey their subjective view of the world. The image below is a part of Schiele's painting *Standing Male Nude with Arm Raised.* The variety of saturated skin tone and extremely lean body of the figure is a demonstration of expressionist style as it does not reflect the physical reality but rather what the artist sees. I think this intensify the emotion in the scene and I want to try out similar technique in my painting.



This watercolor painting to the left is my attempt to imitate Schiele's style. Schiele did most of his works with gouache and oil paint. Since I don't have these paints available, I tried to recreate the look of Schiele's painting using watercolor, pencil, and color pencil. I did not clean up the pencil outline and leave it a little messy from place to place to give that spontaneous look that mimics Schiele's line work. I colored the figure with olive green watercolor, similar to the green tint in Schiele's portraits. Once the watercolor has dried out, I begin to apply darker green onto areas in the shadow and also spots of yellow and red in areas next to the joint. Through using a variety of colors and tones to depict the figure, the overall image appears less dull. The watercolor did not fully cover the paper but instead leave marks with a level of transparency. I feel like leaving the watercolor half-transparent resembles the quality of a ghost and could strengthen the idea of life's uncertainty. I also observed that Schiele often leave dark smudges on the figure's body to represent bruises. To recreate this effect, I used 2B pencil to make marks on the naked figure and smear it with my finger to blend it with the watercolor. I paid attention to emphasize the muscle of the limbs and the twist of the body to manipulate the proportion of different body parts to the point that it looks unnatural. This combined with the green hue of the figure's skin tone achieved an eerie, unpleasant feeling for the viewers, which I think is what I wanted to incorporate into my final work. Schiele's works is mainly self-focused and introspective, discussing insecurity he faced in his life and exploring sexuality. Though this is not what I want to achieve in my piece, it inspired me to showcase emotion in my painting through the figure's posture.



THESE TWO PIECES (ABOVE AND BELOW) ARE MY OWN WORKS.
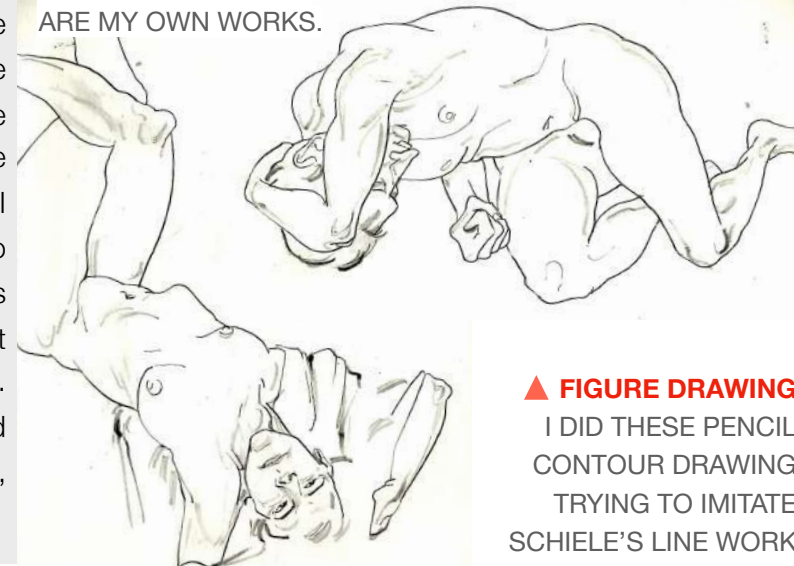


▲ **FIGURE DRAWING** I DID THESE PENCIL CONTOUR DRAWING TRYING TO IMITATE SCHIELE'S LINE WORK

For my next peice of artwork I want to make a painting base on the theme of life and death. This will be related to my exhibition theme — "adolescence" as in the process of growing up we will be forced to face the death of many people, including our (or becoming an adult) family, friends, and eventually ourself. The fear for death continues to haunt many. Therefore, I want to make a series of work that records how people cope with death of somebody they love.
（生且）
the ^

I start by creating several thumbnails and experiment with different materials alongside. The 1st thumbnail portrays a mother and her son. I tried to hint their relationship by designing their posture, the woman should hold the man as if she was handeling a baby. However I don't think this is obvious enough, If I am to develop this into a resolved work, I would probably adjust the age of the mother by adding some wrinkles to her face or paint her hair white. The son is the deceased in this thumbnail because I am trying to express that anyone could die at anytime no matter how strong you are —— this is the unpredictability of life. I did not show the son's facial feature here but rather cover his face with a white cloth to show he already pass away. The green color tone of his skin is also conveying this meaning.

**THUMBNAIL 1 ▶**
DRAFT: PENCIL
OUTLINE: PENCIL
LOCAL COLOR & SHADOW: WATERCOLOR
HIGHLIGHT: ACRYLIC



Material wise, I prefer the effect of water color on watercolor paper in thumbnail 1 rather than drawing paper on thumbnail 2. Incorporating colorpencil while coloring gives more texture to the drawing, but also smooth the border of watercolor stroke. It also offers a great variety of color.

THUMBNAIL (2)

tools I use to color these thumbnails are :

Draft: pencil
Outline: ink
color (local color): water color
color (shadow): water-color + color pencil
color (highlight): Acrylic + color pencil
on drawing paper

FLAT
size 12

ROUND
size 6

CALLIGRAPHY
WRITING
BRUSH
small
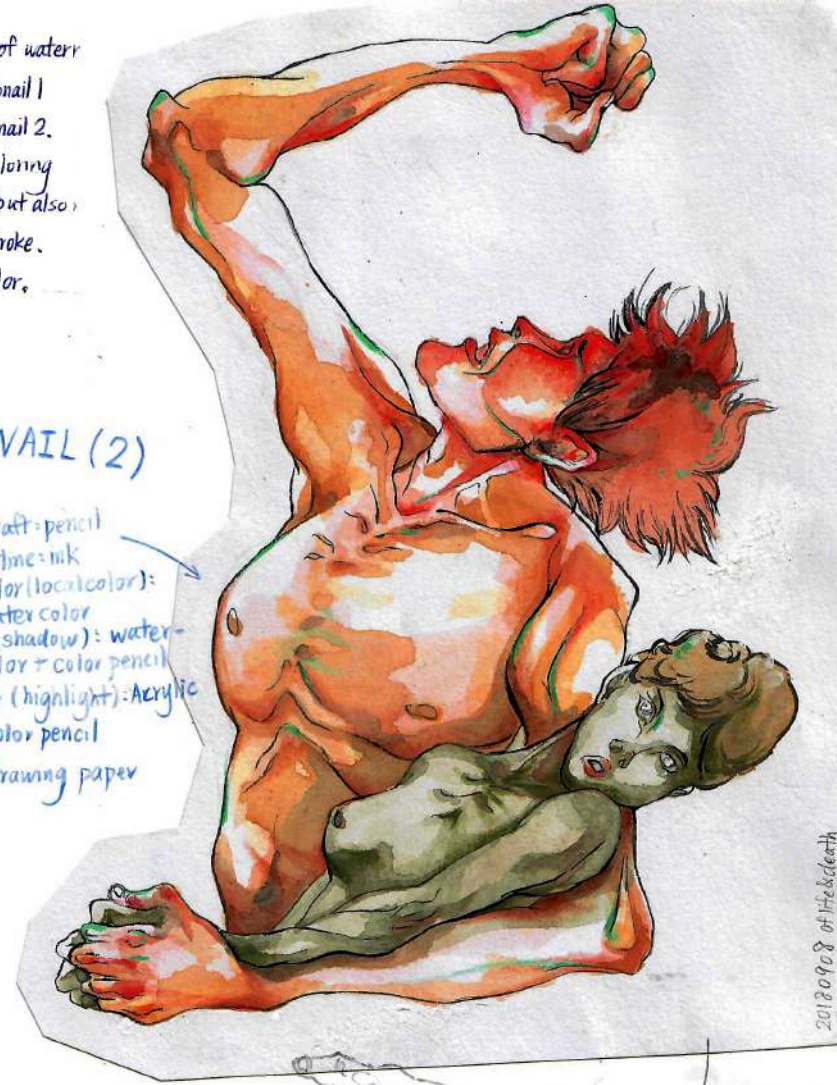


20180908 of life&death

The 2nd thumbnail portrays two lovers, one suffering under grief over another's death. I want the emotion in this one to be even sharper and stronger to show one's dissatisfaction and anger towards their fate. Therefore I drew one man shouting to the sky, as if he was accusing the god for his partner's death. Two of them were still holding hands eventhough one already passed away, which shows the fondness of their love. I think watercolor looks better on the watercolor paper which comes with a cream tone, thus if I decides to use watercolor in my final work I would choose to use another paper. Yet before that I still wants to exp-eriment with black and white painting using pencil or charcoal.
(monotone)

line for the shadows first, then fill it in with 3B pencil. I control the force I put on the pencil to create gradients accross the figure's body so the image appears three dimensional. I uses a 4B pencil for the darkest dark in areas like the male figure's arm and the edge of shadow (along the terminator, core shadow). This helps to create details in the darker regions and add three dimensionality to the painting.

The light source of this composision is between the male & female figures' head, so then the man is lit from beneath and the woman is lit from above. I want the audience to see that they are both turning away from the light, which implies that they are not in the bright side of life but facing struggles in their lowest point.

Overall I like how this image look in monotone. I think it emphasize the contrast between light and shadow, which makes the composition alot more effective and dramatic. However, I did not like the tone of this watercolor paper. I would prefer something not as creamish, like a colder white. I think It would have communicate the emotion better.

In addition, I want to try making the background dark in the resolved peice.

**THUMBNAIL 3** ▲
DRAFT: PENCIL (HB)
OUTLINE: INK
SHADES: PENCIL (2~4B)

For the third try I adopted the same composition from thumbnail 2 but change the posture of the male figure slightly. His body is bending in a larger angle and face turned towards the sky, which I believes make the scene appears more dramatic and has more impact on the audiences. The woman now have a white fabric covering her face that helps to communicate the fact that she was dead.

Since this is in black and white I really want to bring the contrast up with different darkness (shades) of pencils. I uses 2B to planned out the out-

THUMBNAIL (4)
Draft: Acrylic
Shades: Acrylic
Background

INK AND ACRYLIC ON WATER COLOR PAPER
◄ **THUMBNAIL 4**



EXPERIMENTING WITH MEDIUMS

I like how Hogarth paints each muscle separately, and the division between different muscle group is apparent. He also indicates the direction that the fascicles are growing through connecting the starting and ending point of the muscles. I also want to experiment with this style to see whether it would be suitable for my final painting. I focused on painting human's torso and upper body. I took a slightly different approach from Hogarth. Instead of only using a black marker and creating layers of shade through controlling the compactness of brush stroke, I use six shades of grey to illustrate my figure. The brushes I use have a brush-like tip and therefore allows me to control the thickness of my strokes. I begin with the lightest tone and work my way towards the darkest shade. I kept the center of each muscle group light while darkening their two ends, which helps to show their volume. To differentiate different muscle groups, I left white borders between them. Overall I think this experiment is not very successful. Although the shape of the muscle does look exaggerated, I think their tone is too similar, and the figure will blend into a chunk of grey when it is observed from far away.
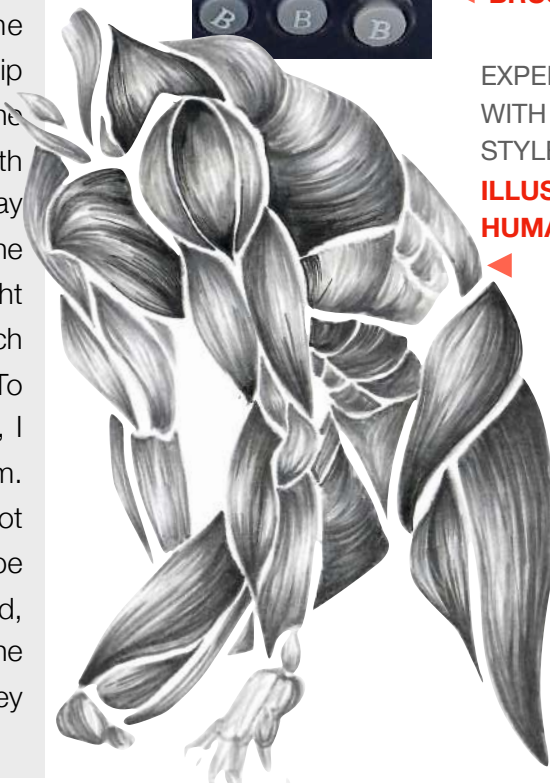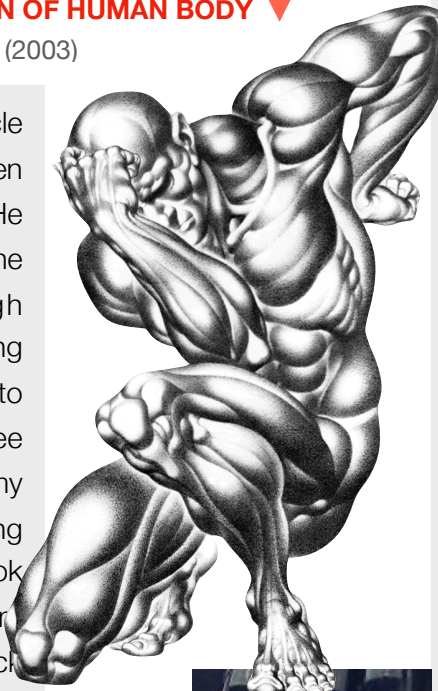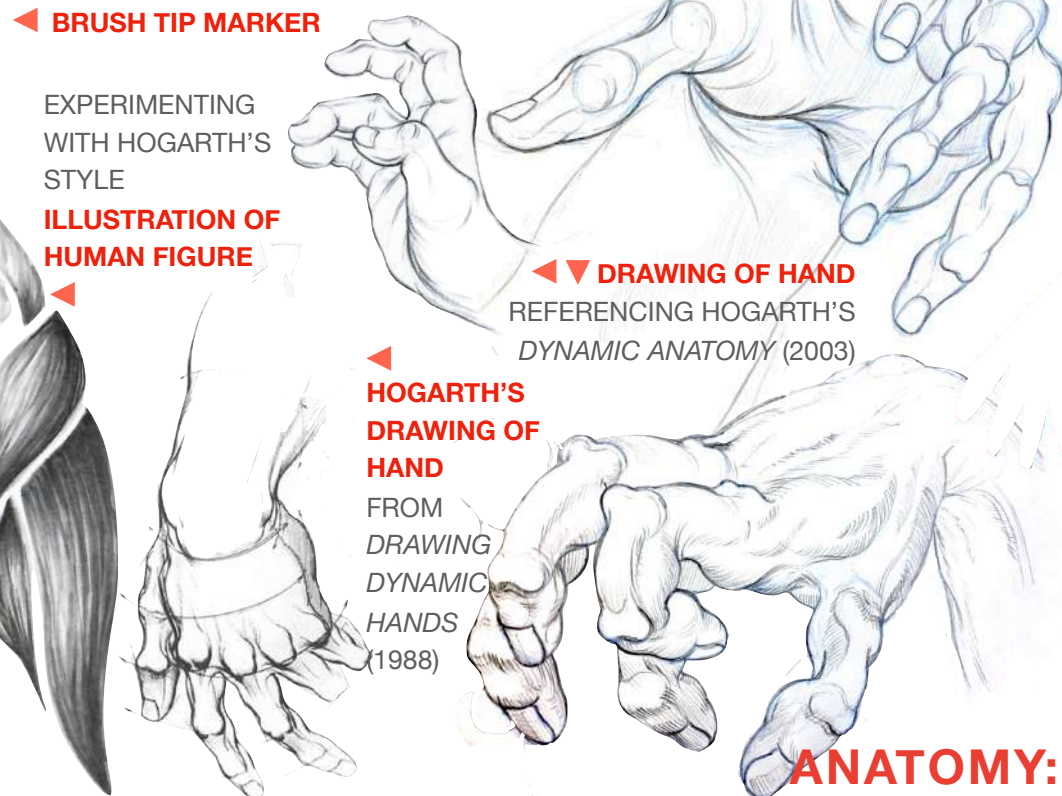
The male figure in my painting would be raising his right arm with his fist clenching hard. Since this gesture is so complex, I decided to investigate the anatomy of the hand to help me illustrate the structure and proportion of hand accurately and naturally. I was referencing works by Burne Hogarth, who is an American cartoonist that published numerous anatomy books for artists. His whimsical and dynamic style draws me. His sketches of hand show the action and force of finger very clearly through emphasizing the muscle tendon. To stress the volume of the muscles, he also solely uses black and white for shading, which makes the tone very contrasting and the posture exaggerating. Although I am not trying to recreate this style in my artwork, Burne's depictions of the human figure can serve as a great guide on how to paint hands realistically while demonstrating its forces.
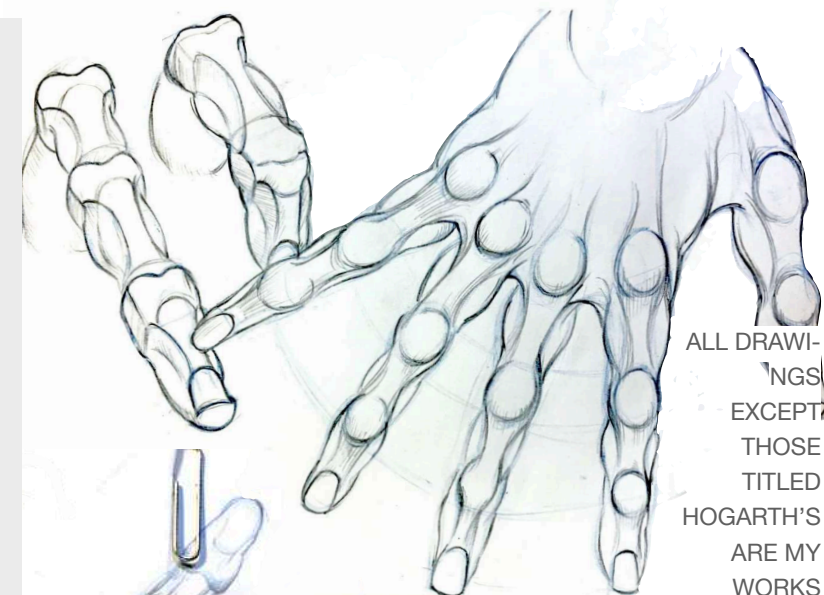


ALL DRAWINGS EXCEPT THOSE TITLED HOGARTH'S ARE MY WORKS

**◄▲ DRAWING OF HANDS**
REFERENCING HOGARTH'S
*DRAWING DYNAMIC HANDS* (1988),
PAGE 23



◄ **BRUSH TIP MARKER**

EXPERIMENTING WITH HOGARTH'S STYLE
**ILLUSTRATION OF HUMAN FIGURE** ◄

The drawings besides are my recreations of Burne Hogarth's sketches of hands from his book "Drawing Dynamic Hands". The original illustrations by Hogarth have curvy forms and dark contour which emphasizes the fleshy nature of the palm and fingers. To imitate this, I avoided using straight lines in these drawings except with the reference lines that were used to align the position of the knuckles and fingers. I think this technique was quite successful.



**◄▼ DRAWING OF HAND**
REFERENCING HOGARTH'S
*DYNAMIC ANATOMY* (2003)

◄ **HOGARTH'S DRAWING OF HAND**
FROM *DRAWING DYNAMIC HANDS* (1988)

ARTIST RESEARCH
**ANATOMY: BURNE HOGARTH**

# STUDYING THE VALUE OF LIGHT AND DARK TONES

Since the final painting would be in black and white, I want to practice drawing in greyscale to study how to accurately depict the nuances of objects' tones and values when they are placed under different lighting condition. To start with, I found a portrait photograph online and created a greyscale copy of the photo. I begin by identifying the mid-tone of the photo. The subject of this drawing is under natural sunlight, so the light is coming from all directions. As a result, the mid-tone in this photo would be the skin tone of the man. Since I am drawing on a toned paper, the mid-tone is already colored for me. Therefore, I begin by filling in light shades with a 2B pencil to construct the basic shape of the face, then gradually adds darker value in the shadow areas by switching to a 4B pencil. To create smooth gradients between different tones, I frequently switch between pencils and control the strength I am holding them against the paper. I also use my finger to smudge the pencil mark from time to time. The highlight from the fur around the man's face is added in the end with a white colored pencil. The process for the figure drawing and the hand study below is mostly the same as how I create the portrait.

As for the hand drawing, I try not to rely on photo reference and draw from real life. The technique and process are similar to sketching with a photo. However, I need to capture the basic shape of my hand in a short amount of time. I think the biggest difficulty of drawing in grey scale is showing the boundaries between overlapping objects with a similar shade. For example, in the hand drawing below, two fingers are overlapping with each other. I attempt to separate them through emphasizing the highlight on the finger that is closest to the viewer, so it appears to be more three-dimensional. Furthermore, a dark outline is added to the bottom of the hand to indicate that it is under shadows. I think working with the toned paper makes the drawing process a lot more efficient. I could perhaps begin my final painting with a grey canvas to establish the mid-tone first, then move on to adding highlights and shadows.

Pencil drawing is a medium I am familiar with. Though it works well in the portrait and figure drawing, I do not think I would use it for my next project as I want to use less refined strokes to help express the fury of someone who loses their loved ones. Nevertheless, these drawings are good value practices for me as being able to recreate tones of different objects on paper is crucial to make them appear realistic.

▼ **STUDY OF HAND**
REFERENCING MY OWN HAND WITHOUT USING PHOTO

# EXPERIMENTING WITH INK AND BLEACH & POSTER PAINT



ALL IMAGES ON THIS PAGE IS MY WORK
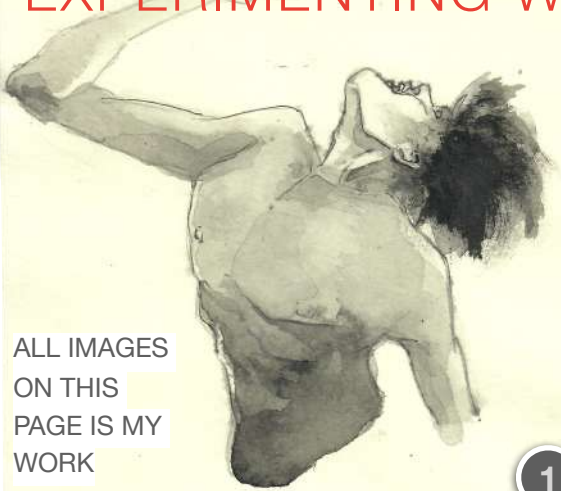


I want to see how ink and bleach would look like on this piece, so I did some experiments with watercolor paper and Xuan paper. On the first attempt, I wet the watercolor paper first then traced the outline of the figure using a 0.2 marker. I like how the ink of the marker is feathering and spreading because of the water, so the outline looks less rigid. I also think the effect of dry brush looks good on the man's hair. The roughness or the brush strokes give a spontaneous and wild feeling, which suits the emotion of the man. To create layers of shade, I have to wait till the first wash has dried out, then apply darker ink onto areas of shadows. Though this makes the figure looks more three dimensional and realistic, I realized a problem when I am trying to add bleach: the bleach cannot wash out the ink on the paper. Originally, I was planning to create highlight with bleach. Yet although I have tried bleach from two different brands, it seems to have no effect on the ink. I think this might be because the ink has already dried when I add the bleach.



On the second try, I drew the outline with a brush to see how it would look. I like how the stroke would vary in thickness depending on the force of my hand, yet I think the ink is a little too dark for the outline here. This time, I tried to apply the bleach before the ink dry, which means I have to work very fast and make hasty decisions. Therefore, I only applied two layers of ink this time. This result in a very flat illustration, which is not the style I am going for. I added bleach to the bottom of the man's torso. Though it did work this time and made the shade of the ink slightly lighter, it spread very fast because the paper is too wet. I cannot control the shape of the bleach with my brush.

Since bleach does not work so well on watercolor paper, I want to give it another try with Xuan paper. I first wash the paper with diluted ink, hoping that I could bleach it out later to create the highlight. I realize that the Xuan paper absorbs the ink a lot better and faster; I was able to create darker shades with ink in a shorter time. However, ink also spread more uncontrollably on Xuan paper when I use a wet brush. The bleach also did not work on this attempt though I tried to apply it multiple times, before and after the paper has dried. I assumed it might be because the bleach's concentration is too low. Anyway, I do not think I would continue the experiment with ink and bleach.

Beside ink and bleach, I also experiment with poster color in grayscale. To the right is a study on the man's posture. I painted the basic shape with a light gray first then indicate the curve of the muscles with a darker shade. I enjoy painting with this medium as its color is pure and full. However, I also realized that it is harder to blend the poster color when compared to acrylic. The gradient between different shades is often not smooth. To the left is two more detailed studies of the figures' faces. I divided the faces into simpler planes, each filled in with a different shade of gray. By doing so, I was able to show the areas of light and shadow and indicate the form of the faces. Although I am pleased by how it turned out, I don't think these drawings are impactful to the viewer as the figures' expressions does not look intense enough.

# PROCESS: ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

I decided to base my final painting on thumbnail 4. I like how the brush strokes were visible with acrylic, which I think helps to emphasize the intensity of the emotion that I want to convey. I first colored the canvas with dark grey like what I did in the thumbnail, then used a pencil to sketch out the rough composition. I added water to white acrylic to paint the mid-tone which gives a fading effect. This gives the figures a ghost-like feeling, which matches the theme of death that I am exploring here. However, I believe this effect would be lost if I apply more paint to the canvas.





JAGGED EDGES



**PROBLEM & SOLUTION**

I can very easily adjust the tone through controlling the ratio of water to acrylic, in areas of highlight I would apply pure paint without adding water. I decided to add shades of grey around the edge of muscles as I think it will help defines the shape of the chest better, yet it did not blend in well with the mid-tone and left jagged edges that looks unnatural. I think this will distract the viewer's attention. To solve this, I tried creating smooth gradients of grey through gradually adding more acrylic to the water and paint mixture. Although this means I cannot keep the fading effect that water gives, it does make the paint easier to control, as well as make the anatomy of the figure looks more realistic and believable.

In this stage, I realize the figures look too flat because the contrast between the light and shadow was not enough. This makes the figures' limbs lose their volume and three-dimensionality.

Since I could not find live models to pose for me for references, I have to search images online to see the structure of the muscles for different body parts. It is challenging for me to find a balance between a realistic depiction of human's muscles and painting a distorted posture with exaggerated proportions. Because I elongated the man's arms, it is sometimes difficult to figure out where a muscle should start or end. I do not want to stretch out a muscle too much, or else it will look unnatural.

I went on to add more details to the figure. In areas like the chest, forearms, and the abdomen, I defined the shape and volume of the muscle groups more through adding shadows in places where muscles overlay each other. Since I only have one strong light source present in this composition, I want to emphasize the contrast between lights and shadows more. Therefore, I added pure white paint to areas closest to the light source, for example, the back of the man's neck, to indicate where the light is coming from. In areas with reflected light, such as the bottom of his chest, I use light grey. However, I realized only brightening areas close to the light will make the face of the man too dark, so I also added brighter tones only to his main facial features to emphasize his expression.



LIGHT SOURCE
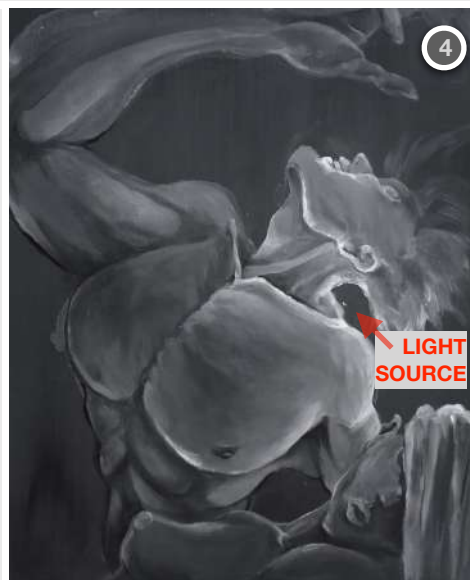
Since the torso of the man is blending into the background in phase 4, I decided to brighten up the right side of the figure a bit more. I also added darker outline around the man's right arm, chin, and torso to further separate him from the background. As for the woman figure, I darken her left face and created hard edges of cast shadow cause by strong lighting. I think by placing her in shadow helps to convey the idea that she is deceased.
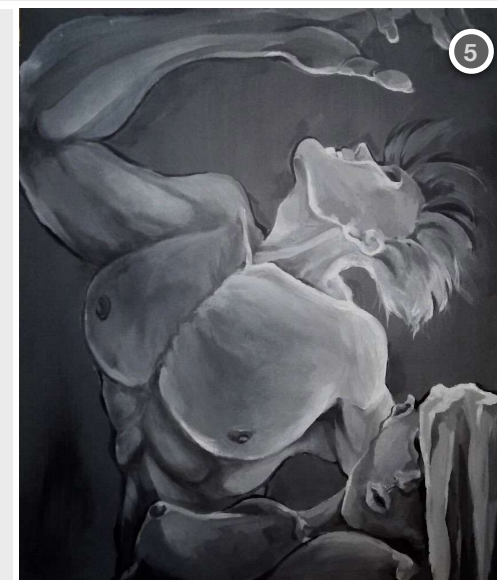
I do not think the composition of the resolved piece is as strong as what I planned in my initial exploration. Initially, I hope the left arm of the man could circle the female, which would have created a circular composition within the frame. However, as I am transferring my sketches onto a larger canvas, I have accidentally left out the bottom part of the scene. As a result, the composition is incomplete as one end of the circle is removed. I felt like this weaken the connection between the man and the woman. Though viewers may still have guessed that they are lovers, the bond between them does not feel as strong. I think if I have left more room in the bottom of the scene and show the man supporting the woman and holding her hand, the piece would have conveyed their romance clearer and explain to the viewers why the man is so furious.

I initially want to make the contrast on the man's face stronger to emphasize his facial expression. However, since the background is a dark grey, darkening the tone of the face would blend it to the background. To make the face stand out more, I have to add black outline around the figure and separate it from the background. I think it looks a little unnatural up close, perhaps darkening the entire background would have been better. If I have more time, I would want to add more details to the man's face and paint his bone structure more realistically.

I also think my brush stroke could have been more gentle when painting the piece of fabric covering the woman's face. Right now it does not look very smooth as the shades are not blended out enough. I felt like the division between light and shadow is too sharp here, although this is a result of intense lighting from above. However, I could definitely make the transition from light to dark smoother, so the fabric would feel lighter and more breathable. Also, if I could repaint this part, I think I can take more reference photos of my cloth, and edit them into black and white to see how creases form and look like. This way I could depict the fabric more naturally.



# REFLECTIONS

I am quite happy with how the manipulation with body proportion turned out on the final piece. Although it is very exaggerated, I think it demonstrated the rage of the man better and could impact the viewer on a higher level. By emphasizing the muscularity of the man, it could also show that death could affect anyone no matter their strength and health. I was inspired by two artists—Egon Schiele and Burne Hogarth—to play around with proportion. I think it not only makes the painting visually intriguing to look at but also helps to present the emotion of the figures and engage the audiences.



Like my last piece A Touch of Green, I decided to paint this piece in black and white as well. This is because I think removing color from the scene could serve as a symbolism of death and how the woman is losing her life. Painting with black and white also allows me to pay closer attention to the lighting and difference between tones. I like how the light is coming from the back of the man's face and lighting the figure from the left. Rather than directly illuminating the two figures from the front, side light covered most of the man's body and the woman's face in shadow, which gave a more dramatic effect. After studying lighting through painting in black and white, I think this would be an excellent foundation for me to experiment with color on my next piece.

# EXHIBITION PIECE 3: ANIMATION

## INITIAL IDEAS AND INTENTION

For my next piece, I want to experiment further with digital art and 2D animation. To respond to the theme of change with my own experience, I want to discuss adolescence in terms of how it alters teenagers' mind and body. In my adolescence years, I am often confused and surprised by the changes that my body is going through. I want to express this emotion in my work. I figure animation could be a suitable medium as it is time-based, which means the viewers get to watch the change occurs and unfold. I began by creating a test animation on paper. I planned out the main movement of my character on a piece of A4 paper, and this would serve as a guide later to tell me where the animation should go. I planned to make a short animation of a boy jumping from one end of the paper to another. I moved on to draw individual animation frames on separated pieces of paper by layering them on top of the draft paper. By placing a light box below the draft, I am able to copy the movement of the character onto the animation paper by tracing and refining the rough line drawing. I find it challenging to align the character's poses to its previous and next frames. Therefore I put multiple horizontal lines across the draft paper to make sure the character's movement is natural. To animate the character, I have used the pose-to-pose animation method, where the starting and ending pose of the character is already determined, and the in-between frames were filled in afterward. This gives me more control over what I am drawing, and the resulting animation has more clarity.



▲ **INITIAL PLAN FOR MY TEST ANIMATION**

I drew a total of 16 frames for this animation. They were scanned into my laptop, and I adjusted the contrast and sharpened the images with photoshop. I use an online GIF maker—Ezgif.com—to create my animation. The website allows me to manipulate the animation speed, which I set to 500 milliseconds. By adjusting the speed, I can convey different emotion and emphasize the swiftness of the character's movement. I am quite satisfied with how the animation turned out; I think the character's movement is fluid and natural. However, since this test animation is hand-drawn, the folds and creases of the animation paper remain after I scanned it to my laptop. I want to avoid this in my final piece. Therefore I think creating animation directly with computer programs like Photoshop might be a good idea.



▲ **SELECTED FRAMES FROM TEST ANIMATION**

◀ **EXPERIMENTING WITH DIGITAL COLLAGE**



I moved on to creating several digital collages in Photoshop to brainstorm for the style and composition of the animation. I adjusted the tone and brightness of the image using the curves tool. For all pictures, I lift the endpoint at the bottom left of the curve to make the darker tone looks washed-out. This helps to create a depressing feeling and also emphasizes the pop of color. I want to demonstrate the frustration and struggle of teenagers as they go through the change in their mind and body during puberty and adolescence. From right to left, the illustration added to the collage represent girl's struggle during menstruation, teenager developing sexual desire, and boys growing facial hair.

# BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

- overly sensitive about physical changes
- uncertainty
- confusion
- lost of identity in the process of becoming more independent
- constant mood swings

Emotions associated with puberty

**Adolescence and puberty**

Mental State
- unstable
- high libido
- anxiety
- confusion about life / loss of direction

- first love & romance
- relationship with friends & peers

- stress from school / peers / family
- Drug dealing
- bullying
- self image / lack of confidence
- Teen pregnancy due to underage sex

Common Issues Faced by Teenagers

physical changes (boys)
- deepen voices
- chest hair & beard
- face becomes more angular
- shoulders broadening
- erections

Physical changes (girls)
- Hips widening
- Breasts growing
- growth of armpit hair & pubic
- Distribution of fat: mainly around hips & thighs
- menstruation

I decide that my animation would focus on reflecting both mental and physical pressures young adult faced when they gradually adapt to the changes happening to their body. For example, girl's insecurity of body fur and student's anxiety due to academic stress and unstable mood swings.

# ARTIST INVESTIGATION
# MICHAËL DUDOK DE WIT

Michaël is a Dutch animator most recognized for his award-winning short film The Monk and the Fish (1994) and Father and Daughter (2000). I like the simplicity of his composition and how he makes use of the positive and negative space to suggest lighting. The balanced horizon line and the emptiness of the background evokes a feeling of peacefulness in the viewer. Michaël is also very skillful at telling stories through movement. Here, the characters are only indicated in silhouette. Although we cannot see the facial details of the figures, their intimacy is hinted through their interactions, for example, the father holding the child's hand.

Balanced Horizon

▲ **SCREEN SHOTS** FROM SHORT FILM FATHER
▼ AND DAUGHTER (2000) BY MICHAËL

Michaël took on a mix of the traditional and digital method when creating this film; the drawings are pencil and charcoal while the colors are added later in photoshop. His color palette is consistent throughout the film. For the sky and the background, Michaël uses creamy-white with a wash of brown and sometimes grey. He often leaves smudges of brown to add texture and make the scene visually appealing. This makes the film looks nostalgic as if the story was told through the eyes of a grown girl recalling her childhood and her father.

On the contrary, the character employs one primary color to differentiate it from the background. The outline and shadow are both done in black and often blended. Different from the American TV cartoons approach where characters show dramatic squash and stretch for comedic effect, the style of European animations and Michaël's works are more contained and poetic. The character's slow but constant movement conveys a sense of calmness in the scene. Although this is not the emotional response I want to evoke in my work, this inspired me to tell the story through objects' motion.

## ◄ SKETCH

21 x 29 cm. Colored pencil, marker, and fine liner.

I tried to reflect how young students feel about school in this sketch. I want to show their confusion and lost of direction by including an astronaut lost in space in the classroom. I have reference photos found online when I am drawing the astronaut suit, but the rest of the sketch is either drawn directly from life or based on imagination.
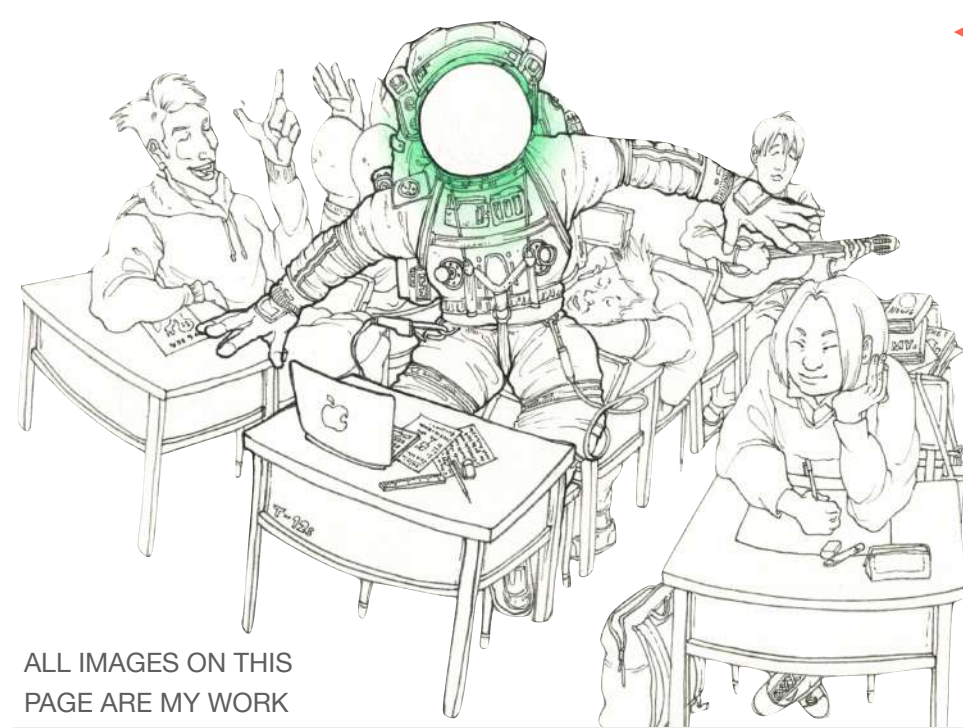
Besides sketching in class, I also attended life drawing sessions with nude models and created several figure drawings (see below). Since my animation would be presenting the changes and new features that appear on teenagers' body during puberty, I want to learn how to depict the human body realistically. I am not used to drawing with an artist's lead, yet I think the variation of thickness in the stroke works well in suggesting the muscular structure of the figure's body. All of these figure drawings lack the background, which conveys a sense of isolation and make the audiences focus on their posture. I also want to try this in the final animation to demonstrate the helplessness and solitude teenagers' felt during their puberty.

28 x 43 cm each. Koh-I-Noor artist's lead. I spent around 5-20 minutes on each drawings.

## ▼ FIGURE DRAWINGS WITH LIFE MODEL



Since my animation aims to reveal young adults' mental and physical struggles during puberty, I decided to do some sketches of my classmates from real life as a study of teenagers' life. Drawing people from life would also help me in creating my animation as it would include depictions of human bodies. The image below contains pen, marker, and pencil drawings. I tried to make no correction once I leave a mark on the paper to improve the accuracy of my stroke. By doing these sketches, I have identified several common mistakes I made when I am drawing human. For example, I did not pay enough attention to the proportion of the head to the torso; I often draw the head too small. Overall, I like the simplicity and hardness of the line drawing. I think I would apply a similar style on the final animation.

## EXPERIMENTING WITH 2-D DRAWING
## SKETCHING FROM LIFE

I created these style frames in an attempt to find a suitable style for the animation. My aim is to keep these drawings simple as I would have to draw multiple frames to animate the scene later on.



### 1ST ATTEMPT

This is my first design for the style of the animation. I decided to test out a program, Adobe Illustrator, which I am not familiar with. Most of my digital works are done on Photoshop, yet Illustrator can create vector shapes that do not lose resolution when enlarged. I think this perhaps could give me more freedom in adding visual effects in the animation. I create separate layers in Illustrator for different body parts of the character, so later on the movement of these parts can be controlled independently. The basic shape of the character is created with the pen and curve tool. Though these tools allow me to draw curving lines and rounded shape, I think the posture of the character looks too stiff and is not organic enough.

Moreover, the expression of the character does not look frightened and surprising enough. It needs to be more exaggerated to demonstrate how terrified or perplexed teenagers are during their puberty. Therefore, I want to represent their struggle more expressively and abstractly. Here, I portrayed the period blood as a sphere that resembles the shape of the virus, which I think looks more threatening.



### 2ND ATTEMPT

This time I tried to paint the scene with a more colorful background. I am quite satisfied with how the gradient turned out, and I think it complements the silhouette of the character well. Though it is in silhouette, the figure is illustrated more realistically than in the first attempt as I think the character painted in Illustrator does not show the characteristic of a teenager. In this attempt, the figure's posture is also more natural. The background gradient gives this scene a dreamy feeling, which shows that this is the imagination of a teenage girl. However, I do feel the color use in this frame is too vibrant and does not fit the emotion I want to convey.



### 3RD ATTEMPT

This frame is painted in Photoshop. I used a photo of paper texture and added the texture to the drawing using the "multiply" layer blend mode. This creates more subtle tone differences in the color, which I think makes the drawing looks more detailed. Adding an outline to the figure this time helps to emphasize her features better and makes the scene looks cleaner. I think this would help the viewer understand what is happening in the scene and grasp the message faster. However, I also think the look of the character now lacks some personality and is not visually interesting enough. Perhaps adding accessories and pattern to her cloth could make the design more appealing.



### FINAL ATTEMPT

Eventually, I settled down with this design. Though the color palette includes multiple contrasting colors, such as green and purple or blue and pink, all colors are high in brightness and low in saturation. The diversity of colors on the figure also helps it to stand out against the plain background. I kept the idea of drawing period blood as virus from the first attempt and added face-like features to it, which makes it looks even more intimidating. The figure is also the most realistic and detailed out of all attempts, and I think this makes the character's expression more believable and relatable. Though this means more work later when I will be animating this scene, the process would be a little more efficient with digital software. I think the final result would be worth the time.

**INITIAL DRAFT ON PAPER FOR THE FINAL DESIGN OF STYLE FRAME ▼**
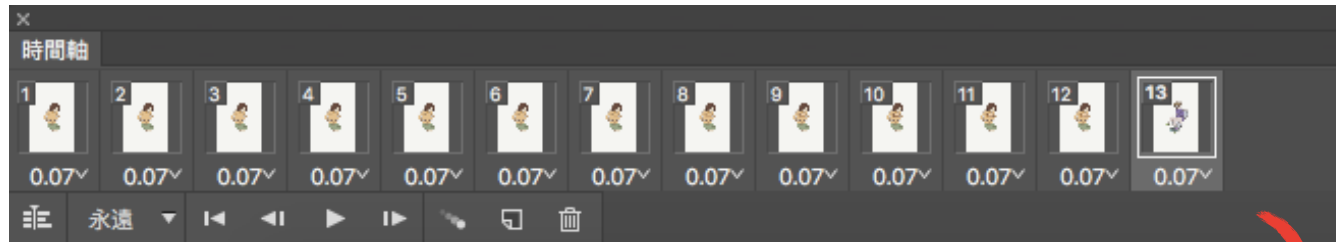
# PROCESS: ANIMATION WITH PHOTOSHOP

I made multiple frames based on the style frame. The beginning and ending frames were drawn first, then each in-between frames were added gradually. The black outline and the color are done on separated layers, and are later merged into one frame. I used the color panel feature in Photoshop to document the combination of colors in the scene and to see if they would work harmoniously on the character. The color panel also allows me to select the same color and fill it into different frames. Though this scene only took up less then two-seconds in the animation, it took me hours to create.

**SELECTED FRAMES FROM THE SCENE**

**COLOR PANEL USED IN THIS SCENE ►**

In this scene above, the posture of the character remains still in every frame. The only animated object is the virus-shape monster signifying period blood. I think this conveys the theme of the animation more effectively as viewers could focus on the changes happening on the character's body this way. At first, the movement of the blood is not very smooth. This problem is later improved by adjusting the speed of the animation and adding more in-between frames.



To create an animation, each frame needs to be drawn on separated layers in Photoshop. I would lock frames that I already finished animating on the layers panel so I would not accidentally modify them. Through changing the visibility of layers, I can modify different frames separately. These frames would later be dragged into the Timeline window by selecting "Create Frame Animation" and "Make Frames From Layers" options on the menu, which would display each layer as an individual frame on the Timeline, then combined into a GIF.



This is the Timeline window where can I adjust the speed and view the animation. To make the movement of objects more natural in different scenes, I adopted the slow in and slow out technique, which means more frames would be used to illustrate the beginning and ending phrase of action, while the middle phrase would have greater spacing. This creates an illusion that an object is accelerating when it starts to move and slowing down when the movement is completed. I can view the effect of slow in and slow out on the Timeline by switching between different frames with the left and right arrow key on the keyboard. Also, the speed of the animation could be altered by entering different number value to the space below each frame. This scene is set to 0.07 second per layer, which means each frame would linger for 0.07 second in the animation. Finally, the animation could be saved and exported in GIF format.

Other then this scene used as an example in the process documentation, I created five other scenes with similar style in the Animation. Other scenes are animated with the same process in Photoshop. I would create a new group in the layers panel so I can organize the frames of each scene. After I completed animating and exporting every scene, I joined the scenes together in video editing program Final Cut, which allows me to add text or audio to the animation and export it in MP4 format. The frame rate is set to 24 frames per second, which is the standard for film speed.

**▼ STARTING AND ENDING FRAMES FROM OTHER SCENES**

# EXHIBITION PIECE 4: INITIAL EXPERIMENTS

For most of my exhibition pieces, I worked on smaller canvases and focused on the delicacy of little details and accessories in the scene to make characters more lifelike. In my next piece, I want to challenge myself to paint on a larger surface to step out of my comfort zone. In terms of topic, I would continue to explore the theme of change and discuss how people would take the initiative to break out of habits and routines to achieve self-actualization. I begin exploring this topic by creating several quick sketches with pencil and a black marker. In these drawings, I tried to show a person crossing the threshold between an old and a new world, escaping from accustomed conventions and fixed routines. Therefore, I divided the composition into two parts with a diagonal line cutting through the upper left and bottom left corner of the scene. Half of the scene is covered in black, representing the shadow of the past. The other half of the scene is kept empty, which represent unpredictable opportunities that await in the future. I removed middle tones and used only a black pen to fill in the shadow, which results in a clear contrast between light and dark. I like the simplicity of the composition and working with black and white as it is a style that I am more familiar with. However, I think only showing a figure walking towards the light in the scene lacks the complexity to convey deeper meanings, viewers may only interpret the painting at a superficial level. I decide to keep the imagery of man walking towards an exit, but I still need to think of a better way to frame the character.

I also want to include the depiction of terrain and nature in this piece as it is also a subject that I am less familiar with. I drew inspiration from the oil landscape paintings by Lawren S. Harris from the Group of Seven, who is skilled in reducing complex landscape into minimal shapes. There is an oddly unsettling feeling to his works, not only because subjects of his paintings are mostly bizarre scenery like steep mountains and isolated island, but also due to his extensive use of dark, desaturated colors. The color use evokes a sense of uneasiness in the viewers, which hints at the potential danger within the landscape. I tried to recreate this feeling by working with graphite and Photoshop. First, a black and white drawing of the landscape is created using graphite. In shaded areas, I also used a black pen to bring up the contrast. This drawing was dragged into Photoshop and modified with the Levels and Curve tools to make the highlights more intense, which helps to separate the tones in the foreground and background of the landscape. To add colors, I used the Overlay layer blend mode. This allows me to keep the details of texture and stroke from the graphite drawing while coloring the scene. Working digitally gives me more freedom during the exploration to experiment with different combinations of colors and see how it affects the atmosphere of the drawing. I realized there is one issue with this method: due to the setting of layer blend mode, areas of highlight cannot show saturated color. Whereas in Harris's paintings, bright areas often contain a tint of blue. I need to alter my process or experiment with another medium to overcome this restriction.

**◀ LAKE AND MOUNTAINS**
LAWREN S. HARRIS (1928)
IMAGE FROM AGO.CA/ EXHIBITIONS



**OVERLAY BLENDING MODE IN ▲ PHOTOSHOP**

# EXHIBITION PIECE 4
## DEVELOPING COMPOSITION

ALL IMAGES ON THIS PAGE ARE MY WORK



I attempted to sketch out my initial idea into little thumbnails with pen and pencil. The first composition looks similar to the initial sketch on the previous page, but a door is added to the scene to symbolize that the man would be entering a new world. The figure's movement is also more energetic and expressive here. However, I think this composition is not engaging enough as the character is placed in the center of the scene.

This composition takes on a comic-like layout. The left part of the scene is a close up of the man's eye to emphasize his surprise as he saw a new world. Separated by a door frame, the right part of the scene is the man opening the door. This action symbolizes the idea that the man is breaking out of his old routine and taking the initiative to start a new life. Although I think unconventional composition like this one helps to capture viewer's attention, I do not think it communicates the meaning of the painting fully. Viewers would not understand the purpose behind the character's action.

To convey the meaning of the piece more thoroughly, I tried to juxtapose the idea of "old habit" and "new opportunity" with this composition. The space where the man is in symbolizes the comfort zone or old routine that he is familiar with, while the space out of the exit represent an unexplored new world. The man is staring at the exit to show his longing for changes in life. I think contrasting the idea of old and new works well in this thumbnail, yet this composition focuses too much on the space within the exit. I think the emphasis of the piece should be placed on the new world that the man would be entering.

This final composition combines all the elements that I think works well in the previous attempts. This thumbnail uses the centre composition, with the main subject placed in the middle to guide viewers' attention. When audiences are standing in front of this painting, they would feel like they are going through the transition from a mundane life to a captivating world with the man. This composition also gives equal focus on the interior and the outside of the door. I planned to make the indoor space desaturated and dark while the outdoor will be vibrant and light, which further emphasize the contrast between the two worlds. Since the viewer could see part of the outdoor space this time, this gives me more creative freedom to illustrate the terrains of the new world.

▲ **UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT**

This is one of my earlier attempts to design the composition of this piece. At this point I was still unsure what the focus of the painting would be. I include multiple figures in the scene to convey the idea that we get to know all kinds of people in our life whenever we enter a new environment or encounter a new opportunity. I want to show that the relationship we established with other through different stages of our life is priceless. However, this attempt failed as each figure in the scenes acts as separated entity. Viewers' attention is distracted and the composition does not work as a whole. At the end, I realized that the juxtaposition between old habit and new aspiration might be a more interesting topic to explore and moved on to that.

This is the process that I went through to create this exhibition piece. I selected a 78.7×109.2cm poster paper to paint on as I think the composition would be more impactful on a large canvas. I started by enlarging and transferring the composition sketch with pencil onto the poster paper. My plan is to draw the outline for different objects in the scene first, then fill them out one by one with acrylic paint. Sketching the composition first helps me to make sure the proportion of each object is correct. Here, I already colored the figure in the center of the composition. In the completed piece, this figure would be standing in the shades and facing the light source. Therefore, His skin tone is slightly tinted with purple and brown to show the effect of the reflected light from the surrounding environment.



In the process, I used paper tape to help me color objects that have a straight border. The paper tape also allows me to paint objects according to perspective and align their edges to the vanishing point. I think the most challenging part of this process is to consider the relationship between different objects in the scene—one object might cast shadows or reflect light onto another. Suggesting the relation between various objects in the scene are crucial to making the composition looks consistent and complete. For example, I illustrated the cast shadow of the figure's arm and cloth on the door. I also added lighter outline around the shadow to introduce a richer texture.



After I finished coloring the door frame, I started designing the landscape outdoor. While painting the terrain, I left visible brushstroke to bring texture to the landscape and differentiate it from the indoor. I think this helps to add vibrancy to the scene and enhances the contrast between the vivid color outdoor and the dull, monotone surrounding indoor.

While coloring the grey background, I increased the ratio of acrylic paint to water so the color looks more saturated. Too much water would make the paper wrinkle. I also used different shades of grey to color the wall so it looks mottled and result in a varying texture. I want to show the astonishing quality of natural landscape while creating an eerie atmosphere in the outdoor environment. Therefore, I choose a palette consisted of complementary colors. Adding hues of green and purple to the orange sky emphasizes the primary color as the color contrast make the orange seems more brilliant. The unusual color of the sky also helps to introduce an unsettling feeling to the scene.

To demonstrate the intricacy of natural landscape, I also focused on creating and overlaying diverse shapes while painting the mountain. The foreground looks unfinished with only grey gradient. Therefore, I added pipes and vents that helps to convey a sense of dullness and mundaneness to juxtapose with the scenery outdoor.



# PROCESS: ACRYLIC ON PAPER

ALL IMAGES ON THIS PAGE ARE MY WORK

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