Process Portfolio

Within this portfolio images contained in a bold red frame are images which were created by others. Images of my own work are not enclosed in a red frame

I started with the idea that I want to explore my idea of beauty, and my first idea is to make a artwork that show 'regret is beautiful', because regret means recognizing something you have done wrong, and wanting to improve it. However later I moved on to explore the ways beauty is shown through vitality. The artworks explore a progression in the understanding of the beauty of vitality from the subject of beauty being more directly related to beauty to the subject being less directly related to beauty. Also most of them employs the imagery of moss as vitality.

Relevance: this artwork started with my interest in beauty. I believe there is something about beauty that attracts humans, it enchant people so that people make things that are beautiful, are attracted to things that are beautiful, though I do not completely know why. With this in mind I wanted to explore how does beauty attract people in a way that make people like them, and this is the starting point for my body of work.

I want to show how beauty in women attract people's attention. For this purpose I would be using oil painting to paint the female figures, oil painting will allow me to portray the texture and manipulate the color of the human figures so it is most realistic. This is because I believe the realistic and naturalistic figures of women are most attractive. If the figures are somehow abstract in texture, form, color, or anything else, it would make the figures less attractive as it is the combination of those elements that will evoke a sense of beauty in us.

ARTIST INFLUENCE

There is compositional and figurative influence taken from Gaulli. Since usually figure paintings or drawings are painted from eye-level, it is hard for me to find a source on how to paint a figure from a low angle of view. *The Triumph of the Holy Name of Jesus* is a fresco filled with human figurative painting from a very low angle of view, though it has adult female figures, the figures are covered with clothing, thus I cannot see the anatomy of the figures, and so I have decided to use the children figure close to the light as I can see the limbs and the anatomy clearly. Compositional influence is also taken. The figures in the observational drawing are also arranged around a light source and are positioned in clouds.

Artist: Giovanni Battista Gaulli
Artwork: *The Triumph of the Holy Name of Jesus*
Medium: Oil on paper, laid down on canvas
Size: 163 x 111; frame: 175.9 x 123.5 x 6 cm
Date: 1661-79,
Website of Vanderbillt, diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu, accessed Jan. 2018

(Down): Observational drawing that I made of the artwork on the left, composition is changed for convenience of own artmaking.

On the left is a design, the human figure of the little babies are changed into figures of adult women, because I believe nowadays people stress beauty in women a lot, especially on social media. The artwork contains different styles of women, their difference shown through their hair. It shows the figures ascending towards a light source, which shows how people are attracted to the beauty that fits their taste the most. The closer the women (the different styles of beauty) are to the light source (people's judgement of beauty), the more beautiful something is. The similarity between the women emphasize the idea of 'taste'.

Reflection & Things to Improve:
   -Though the posture of the human figures in the work on the left shows powerful motion and the angle of view is from down to up, the color on the human figure is not well managed. The places where there are shadows on the human body is colored grey, and it makes the colors abstract where I wanted them to be naturalistic.
   -Showing different styles through hair seem too direct and it is trite. Maybe cancel this idea.
   -The clouds are not fluffy. They seem moody with the grey and the light does not seem to have much influence on them as there is no silver lining. I should make the clouds more fluffy and more light-influenced.
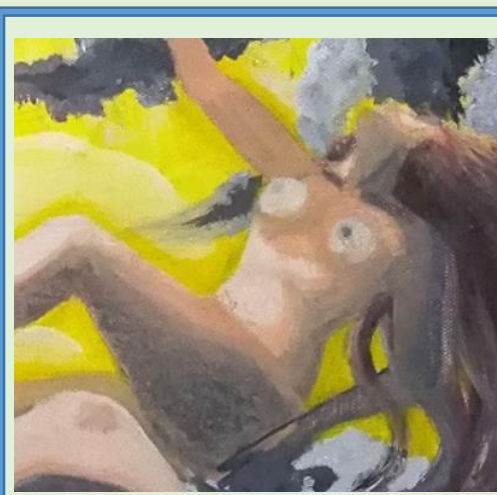
(Above) Image of my own work, 45 cm x 60 cm, oil painting, 2018

A subsequent exploration and refinement of the work, continued working with figures and textures using oil paint
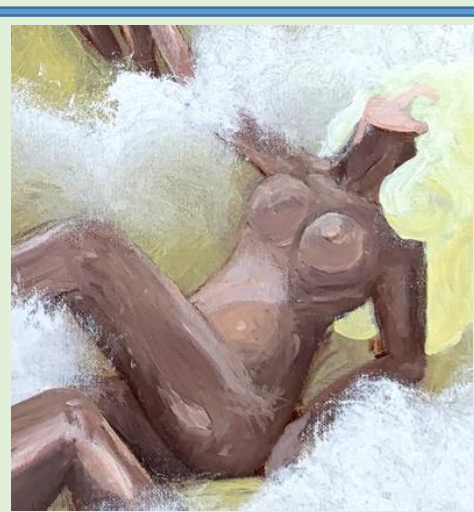

Images of my own work, 45 cm x 60 cm, oil painting, 2018

I first covered the canvas with a layer of turpentine. I use brown oil paint to trace the pencil marks around the figure. I added 100% turpentine to the brown paint to cover areas that are the farthest from the light. I then used 100% turpentine with white oil paint to highlight the areas that come in direct contact with light. For the other areas I added paint with shades between the brown and white paint, with increasing use of linseed oil. For the clouds, I moistened the brush with a little turpentine first, then dabbed the brush with tissue to remove some turpentine, I applied a lot of white oil paint onto a big fur brush, stroking the brush in the paint in the vertical direction so as much paint as possible can be rubbed into the brush. I painted the clouds onto the surface by drawing circles with the brush. When I have finished applying paint, I used a clean brush to very gently wipe the edges of the clouds to make them more fluffy.

(Above) Detail view of my own work (before), oil painting, 2018

(Above) Detail view of my own work (after), oil painting, 2018

(Above) Detail view of my own work (before), 45 cm x 60 cm, oil painting, 2018

(Above) Detail view of my own work (after), 45 cm x 60 cm, oil painting, 2018

Reflection of the painting: The details on this artwork is bad. The hand is composed of lines, there is no face on the figures. Also, the form of the human figures is very un-naturalistic.

Detail view of my own work, 45 cm x 60 cm, oil painting, 2018

Above is a before and after comparison of the first time I painted the design and the second time

Reflection in artwork objective: The expression of the objective is achieved, however the realization of the objective itself is limited. 'Beauty' is also too broad, I could make the definition of beauty more specific. To fix this problem, I have looked for inspiration in the work of other artists.

I took inspiration again from *The Triumph of the Holy Name of Jesus* again, this time more ideologically. This artwork is a religious artwork showing the idea of worship, and like how people are attracted by and look towards beauty, people is also attracted by and look towards things that they worship. More specifically, I believe people worship beauty and especially beauty in women the way they worship entities. The repetition of figures leading towards the light source guides people's view like how beauty guides people's view to look at them.

Improvements: Nude, young, and healthy female human figures are beautiful and attractive because they have a certain erotic quality to them. Eroticism is related to sex and reproduction, thus they are vital. And beauty is vitality. People and society also elevates beauty the same way they elevate entities they worship, and the ascending structure of the figures shows this elevation.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TECHNICAL SKILLS:

Reflection:
I painted from memory and imagination, inventing the figures myself without a specific point of reference, so the human figures are not realistic, the anatomy of the human figure is not well managed, the hair is too uniform, and the lighting effects are too simple (partly because the anatomy needs more attention). Also, the faces of the figures do not have distinct features.
How to improve:
Study the anatomy of a real human figure and paint according to the real anatomy, so the lighting and the features on the human body can be corrected.

I used *Virtual Pose* (a image from *Virtual Pose* is shown on the right) as a source for my observational drawings, it is a collection of video clips that show posed figures which rotate on a slowly spinning platform to show a variety of views. Unfortunately it still does not allow me to see the figure from a low angle of view.

(Above) Chakkour, Mario, *Virtual Pose*, StudioView Interactive, 2003

Further Exploration

By this point I have decided to name my artwork **_Worshippers_**. With respect and acknowledgement to Gaulli, the artist that influenced this artwork, the name refers to the worship of beauty and at the same time softens the idea of eroticism suggested in this artwork.

To familiarize myself with the human figure, I created observational sketches with the reference source taken from _Virtual Pose_

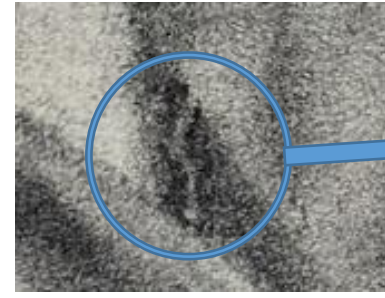## Observational sketches in charcoal

(Above) My own sketch

(Above) My own sketch

What I learned from these observational sketches:
The lighting on the human body can be rougher in some areas even if they do not feel natural when I am making the sketch. Also, the muscles and the bones (anatomy) of the human body give the body shades and shadows in very detail places.

(Above) Detail view of my own sketch
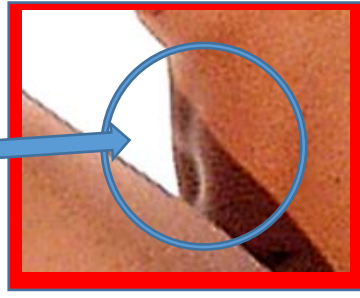
(Above) Chakkour, 2003

Note (left): These areas seemed unnatural when sketched in charcoal. But when color is added they will look more realistic.

I adjusted the figures using _Virtual Poses_ and other sources…

Sources that I used:	Adjustments:

(Above) A picture that I took of my own hand

(Above) Chakkour, 2003

(Above) Detail image of my own work, 8 cm x 8 cm

(Above) Detail image of my own work, 13 cm x 13 cm

I painted the hand of the figure using my own hand as a model. Because of the size of the canvas, the size of the hand is limited, and so painting the details was hard as the hairs on the brushes sometimes separate so I cannot limit the brush to where I want them to be. Adjusting the color was also hard, and the result was kind of brownish. The pink tinge on the hand is also not shown.

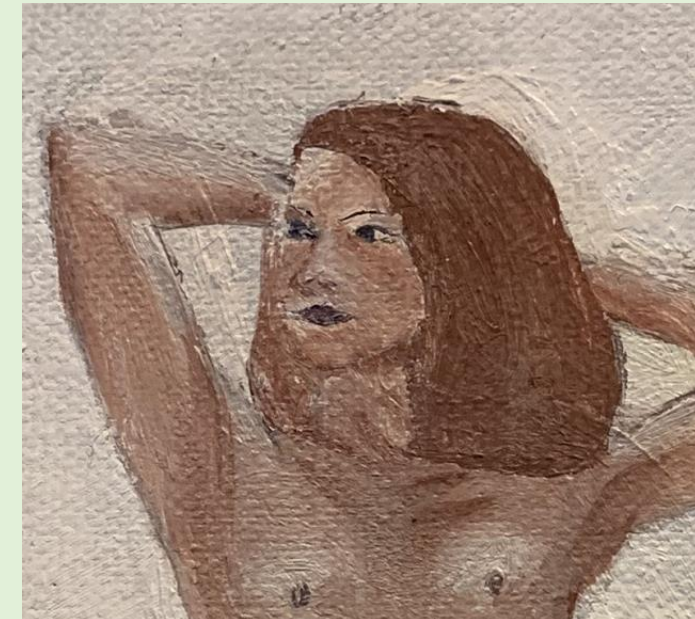| **Sources that I used:** | **Adjustments:** |

(Above) Chakkour, 2003

(Above) Chakkour, 2003

(Above) Detail images of my own work, oil painting, 2019

(Above) Detail image of my own work, 3 cm x 3 cm, oil painting, 2019

Reflection: The shading on the 2 figures in the pictures seemed gray to me, so I used gray. However when painted on the canvas I discovered that even if it seems gray it is not actually gray. So for the rest of the figures I repainted them and made sure that even when the shades looked like they are gray I painted them with tan or brown.

For a artwork this small, every brush stroke becomes crucial. I painted the value on the face then used black to paint the facial features.

Reflection:
I tried to put on facial features such as eye-brows and mouth first. Then I discovered that it began to become difficult to put on shades and highlights on the skin, especially because this painting is very small.
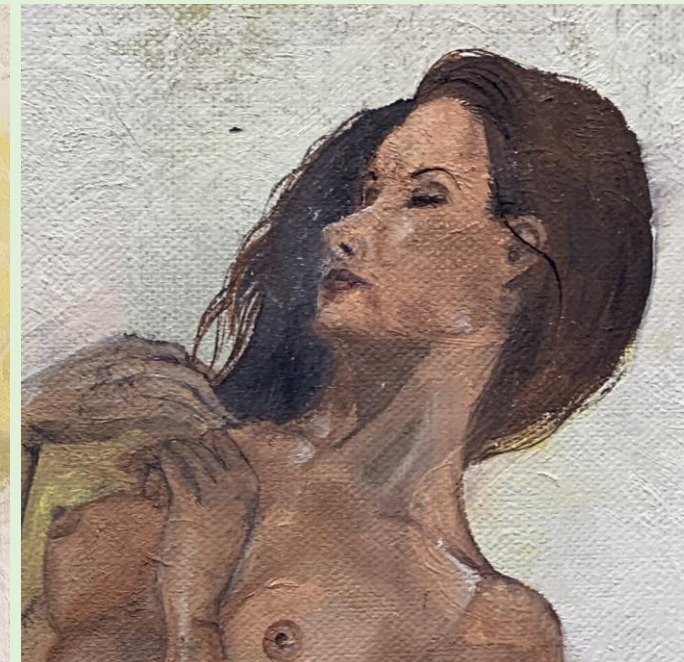**What I did:**
I first put a quick 'sketch' of where each facial feature is, I painted the shades and highlights with 100% turpentine, then I put on the facial features again with 50% turpentine and linseed oil each.

(Above) Chakkour, 2003
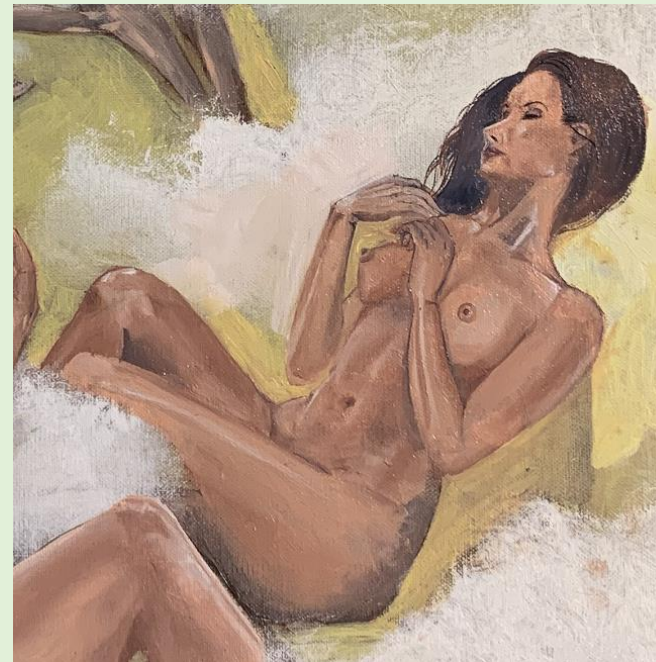
(Above) Detail image of my own work, oil painting, 2018

(Above) Detail image of my own work, 8 cm x 8 cm, oil painting, 2018

What I discovered: Painting with brushes that are only composed of a few hairs is convenient in painting tiny details when painting with oil paint.

Once I have added the clouds, this artwork is finished.

Worshippers
(A final artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component)

45 cm x 60 cm, oil painting, 2019

Bonephilia

This name comes from my belief that beauty in women is found in 3D form and not in 2D shape, thus the name **Bone**philia because the bone structure gives the form.

For this work I want to develop upon previously established ideas on the vitality of the female figure that makes them beautiful. I will be making a garment to achieve this intention. For this artwork I do not want to create 2D models to express vitality, but instead I want to use a garment to make a 3D figure that already exists more vital. I have already explored the anatomy of the female human figure in the last artwork, and so for this artwork I will be applying this knowledge and see how to accentuate the beauty or the vitality of the figure with outside influences. I looked for inspiration in the fashion show: Rami Kadi Haute Couture Fall/Winter 2015.

(Below)
Artist: Rami Kadi
Artwork: Rami Kadi F/W 2015-2016 Collection
Medium: fluorescent, wardrobe
Size: Unknown
Date: 2015-2016 , Website of Designer Soul Fits, Designersoulfits.com, accessed Mar. 2018

The designer uses the materials (fluorescence) and a special presentation (dark room) to create interesting positive and negative spaces (as the viewer can only see the fluorescence and not the black fabric), in this way through strong contrast grabbing the attention of the viewer.
I will use similar methods, by manipulating contrast, to grab attention, or accentuate the beauty of the female figure.

This design make use of the contrasting texture and hardness between leather (yellow) and linen (white). This is so that when the model is moving, the leather—because it is hard and secured to the waist—will move along while retaining its shape. Contrasting with the soft flowing linen it gives the model a certain power that shows vitality, as defined in the artwork before, vitality is power.

(Left) My design, exploring ways to manipulate contrast.

Improvements:
I could develop upon this idea, where I use a hard leather and connect them somehow with a softer leather, so the movement of the female figures affect them differently. This will hopefully bring attention to the form of the female figure as motion will alter the form of the figure, and thus be accentuated. Motion is also sometimes connected to vitality, which is a kind of beauty.

This design developed upon the idea of contrast between soft and hard. The squares on the dress is leather, while the fabric underneath is linen. When posed this way the dress will move in a way that is semi-rigid, giving the texture of a diamond.

(Left) My design, exploring ways to manipulate contrast.

Reflection:
Reviewing my designs, I feel like there is something missing.
I don't know what it is but I trusted my feelings and looked to Rami Kadi Haute Couture Fall/Winter 2015 again and I see that there is something else I already found about this artwork that I did not consider carefully, and that is the method of presentation. The 2 different fabrics on the garments are obviously different in the light, however when put into darkness the white material is not only accentuated it becomes the thing that draws attention the most. I recognized that I could use this idea, where the artist, through adding the element of darkness, shows to the viewer something they could not have seem without darkness. I want to use this idea in my exhibition, where I apply something to the artwork, and brings our something special about the artwork.

I did a simple sketch of my new design (bottom left corner) that developed upon the previous idea (the design on the top left corner).

One idea I thought of but didn't use due to a lot of reasons but because I think it is very good I want to put it here: inspiration comes from a lobster. As a lobster moves it will reveal black areas in where one shell joins the other. I wanted to use this idea, where when the model is not moving the dress hemline is only composed of a red line, but when the model spins the black line that was hidden by the folds of the dress is revealed, just like what happens when a lobster moves.

(Above) My design, ways of exploring how movement can suggest vitality.

Improvement 1:

This design, instead of using uniform blocks, had turned squares into different jagged shapes, more like a diamond, except the diamond's shininess will be replaced by motion. Conceptually this idea suggests that motion (which I have established is very closely connected to vitality) will grab attention and make the women shine just like how the cut surfaces of a diamond make the diamond shine. I believe it is the facets (cut areas) of the diamond that brings out the beauty of the diamond, and so these little 'facets' on the surface of the dress also suggest amplifying women's beauty.

(Left) My design, exploring ways to use the new inspiration.

Improvement 2:
The material put on the artwork for the diamond like texture will be canvas. One thing is because canvas is a hard material that is soft enough for me to sew them on to fabric, another reason is that I can paint on them easily. The canvas can also express something ideological. Canvas possess a certain unexpectedness, because before the artwork is finished no one knows how it will turn out, and it is this unexpectedness that I have related to vitality, because life itself is filled with unexpectedness

Improvement 3:
The dress will be in close contact with the legs. This way when the person moves it will be easier for their movement to influence the fabric clothed around their legs.

As I made the new design I decided to improve my objective. I thought of a idea that I liked better, I will not make the female form more beautiful, instead I want to make the dress more beautiful, and doing this partly by using what change person wearing the dress can give. I want to show how movement can suggest vitality and thus beauty.
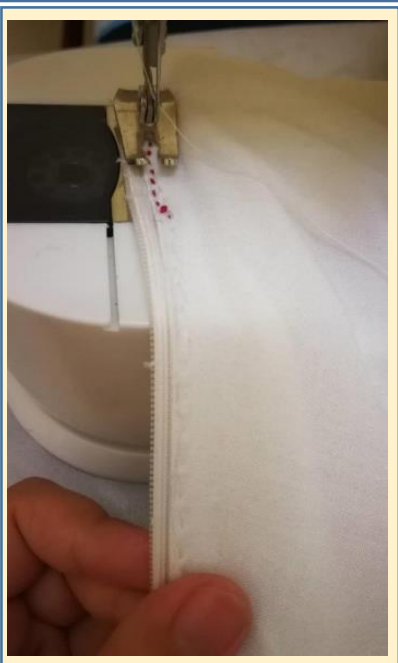
Because the dress was too short I added a layer of silk, and thought this would make the dress look better. However, though it did not make the dress look better it did gave me inspiration. I recognized that I could achieve the desired affect by adding a layer of transparent silk on top. Because silk is very lightweight, it will be affected by movement very easily. So when the person moves they also move the bottom layer, then the outside layer will be carried along with the movement.
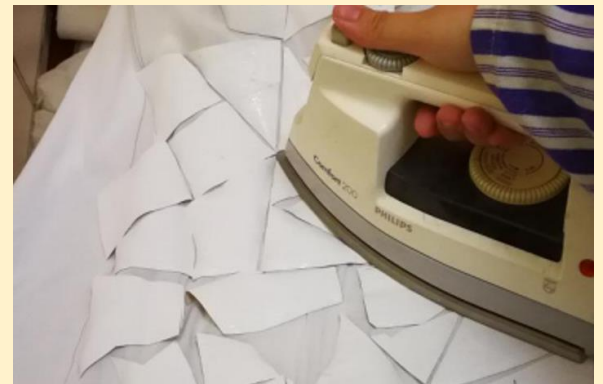
With this comes the idea of utilizing the different layers, and making movement affect them in a way that will give the layers a special quality (extending upon artist influences and the design of the lobster dress that I did not use). I will paint tree barks on the bottom layer, and leaves on the silk in the top layer, and since the bottom layer and the top layer will move in different ways, when the person is moving it will give the impression of trees swaying in the wind.

A trial of making a dress with silk on top. The silk is used for the soft qualities as suggested in the first design, except now the soft fabric is also on the outside.

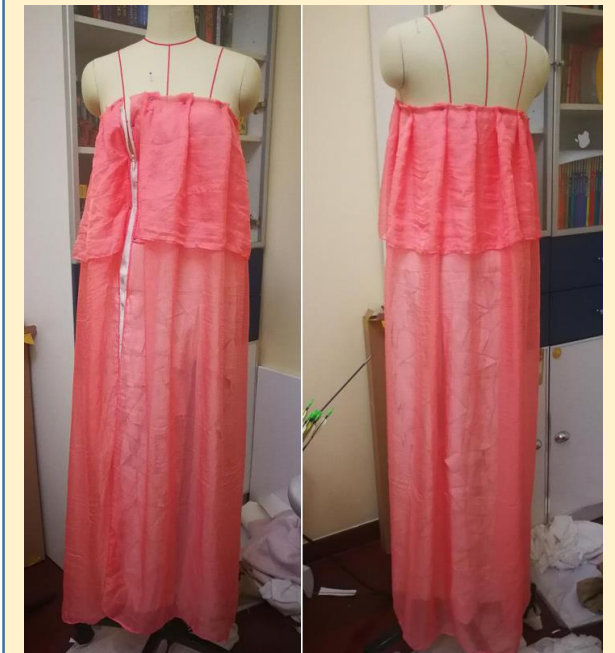(Above) Pictures I took of the garment I made myself

Making of the work

(Below) Pictures I took of the garments in process of making

(Above) Pictures I took of the garments in process of making

(Above) I first modeled the fabric on to the dress, then cut them according to the red lines on the model. After fitting them on to the model, I sewed them together. I didn't sew the place where I will put a zipper on.

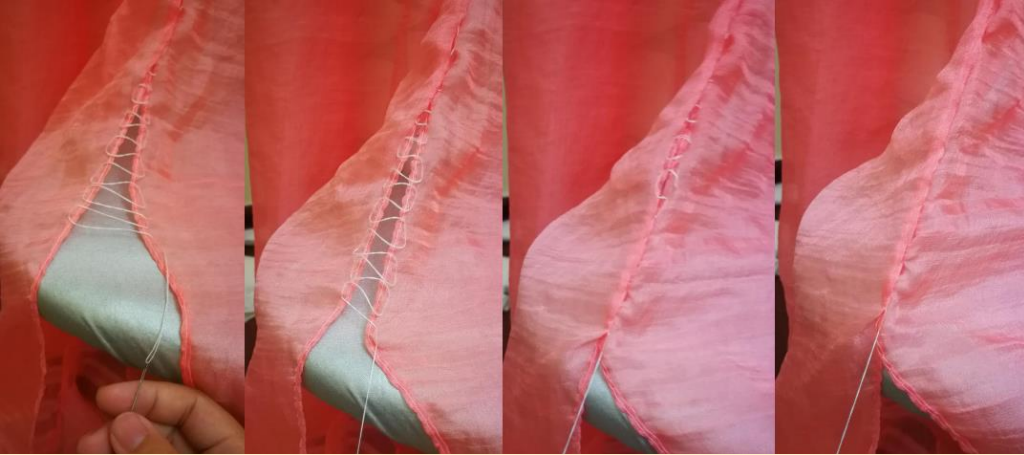(Above) A zipper is sewn with a sewing machine into the linen.

I found trouble sewing the canvas pieces on to the fabric, I also wanted it to be put on so that the canvas would have nothing on the surface. So I cut out pieces of glue and put them on the bottom of the canvas, I then used a iron to iron the canvas on to the fabric. The heat from the iron not only straightens the canvas but also melt the glue so it can spread evenly and glue the canvas to the fabric.

I then put the silk on. I folded the silk and pinned the silk onto the model so I could sew them together after I finished folding and modeling. It was hard work, as I am working on a 3D model.

The picture on the left shows how I sewed the silk together. After I had modeled and folded the silk on to the fabric on the bottom so that it creates a drape that I like, I know I need to find a way to sew the silk together firmly without the delicate fabric showing the stitches, so I went to ask the tailor in a shop who fix clothes for people and asked for advice. She taught me the method I used to sew the silk together on the left, where I put crisscross stitches between the fabric, then pull. I also stitched the silk onto the fabric layer, places where a fold occurs is stitched twice, once to keep the shape, once to secure it onto the bottom layer. However I did not stitch the bottom section, the dress and the hemline, together.

(Above) Pictures I took of the garments as I was making them

Afterwards I recognized that glue might have been a good choice, once it melts due to heat it really sinks into the fabric and the canvas, so it stick them together really tightly. My objective involve 'diamond textures', so the hardness that the glue brings is not a problem.

Now that I have the silk layer secured on top of the bottom canvas layer, I will proceed onto the next step: decorations on the garment.

(Left) Picture I took of the dress before the leaves are printed but with the new belt I made around the waist

(Above) Pictures I took of the process of making the stamps

I cut out a piece of PVC, and drew leaves onto the PVC with a pencil. I then used woodcut knives to cut out the leaves. Because I used PVC boards to make the stamp, I was able to make deep cuts that will prevent acrylic going into the cut areas and printing acrylic into places I don't want them to be. After I finished cutting, I printed the leaves onto the silk the way I would print a woodcut. **Reason for using a stamp:** a stamp will run out of 'ink' if printed multiple times without reapplying acrylic, thus it can allow me to created a gradual fade in the leave prints. This softens the abruptness of the blue on pink.

(Left) Pictures I took of the experimentation on the # of layers of silk I can use before the barks underneath is no longer clearly visible, conclusion: I can use only 1 layer☺

*(Above) Proceeding from left to right, 1 layer, 2 layer, 3 layer.

(Above) Picture I took of the belt in the process of making

I then painted the bark

Painting the bark onto the canvas was more difficult than I thought. Because the canvas are in different shapes, there are fabric in between that I need to be careful not to paint on. Also, because the dress is not stable like a canvas is, I can only paint one piece of canvas at a time, increasing the difficulty.

(Right) Detail view of the surface of the dress, this is after I had painted the barks and printed the leaves.

Bonephilia
(A final artwork)

40 cm x 40 cm x 155 cm, garment, acrylic, woodcut, 2018

Since now I have connected beauty with vitality, and vitality with motion, for this artwork I want to show how vitality is shown through power, which is also closely connected with motion.

To express the power of motion, I looked to Hokusai for inspiration

Artist influence: Katsushika Hokusai,
Artwork: *Great Wave off Kanagawa*
Medium: woodcut printmaking with watercolor
Size: 25.7 cm × 37.8 cm
Date: 1831

Website of Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org, accessed May 2018

Appropriation of the waves of Hokusai. These waves make what was formerly majestic (Fuji Mountain) less majestic than itself (The Waves). This implies the idea of something that possess vitality is more majestic than something which are not, and motion is vitality, majestic is beauty, so something in motion is more beautiful than something not in motion.

(Left) A picture of my own work

The design on the left switched the size of the human figure and the fishes just like how Hokusai switched the size of the mountain and the wave, to show them crashing down upon the human figure in the glass bowl. The contrast between the sizes and the thin mist going inside the bowl makes the human even smaller and brings out the force of the fishes as they are crashing down.

Reflection:
I didn't use the artist connection creatively enough, I just turned the wave into the fish and the mountain into the human. It didn't show how things with vitality dwarf things without vitality. Also, maybe the artist influence can be more conceptual?

I made observational sketches of horses to study their anatomy. Before making a artwork of a living creature, study their anatomy first is a lesson I learned as I made *Worshippers*.

(Left) My own observational sketch, reference source taken from Website of Breeds of Livestock, Department of Animal Science, afs.okstate.edu, accessed March 2018

I decided to appropriate Hokusai's waves as a motif for showing the idea "things with vitality dwarf things without vitality". I will use horses and waves as motifs in my design. This is a mythological reference to Poseidon, god of the sea. Since the first life on earth come from the seas, the sea can thus be a symbol of vitality.

I used woodcut to create this artwork. One reason is because the choice of color in this artwork is very important – I will use color's ability to show impact to express power as well – so woodcut can allow me to experiment in printing multiple times in different colors.

This design use horses for repetition. The horses are shown galloping towards the audience. The design make use of multi-color printmaking, where I used 2 watercolor to print, surprisingly, it creates a gradual change in the colors. This use hierarchal size to make the horses more magnificent than the surrounding environment, such as the mountains. Magnifying the horses comes into contrast with the viewer's knowledge of proportion, as the horses are definitely smaller, but this artwork made them grand.

(Left) Picture of my own work

Below is 4 pictures showing each board that I have cut. I cut the first board first, then printed it. I then moved the printed sheet still upside down to another board. I then printed the 2 boards after I finished cutting, and stuck the print upside down to the third board. I repeated the same process for the fourth board. This allows to accurately locate where each layer should go, so the layers will fit together.

(Above) A picture of the woodblock I have cut, block 1

(Above) A picture of the PVC board I have cut, block 3

(Above) A picture of the PVC board I have cut, block 2

(Above) A picture of the PVC board I have cut, block 4

(Above) A picture of the trial print

For the first block, I used a plywood block. Plywood is good for small prints, because it has layers that I can lift off with a knife easily. However, when I am managing bigger blocks such as the 25 cm x 60 cm block that I am using, the shallow cuts are a big obstacle to making cleaner prints. When I used a brayer (a device to roll ink onto the woodblock) to apply watercolor onto the woodblock cut areas will also receive ink, and will print onto the paper so the print is not clean. Also the paper is too soft, this increases the chance of the paint being printed in the cut areas. So for the rest of the 3 block I used PVC. PVC allows me to make deep cuts easily, and the cut areas also look better, so even if I printed the cut area the print would look better.

I used watercolor because it has color unlike the black printing ink, and it is a paint that I can apply on to the block with a brayer, also this is a trial print, so I was experimenting with different materials.
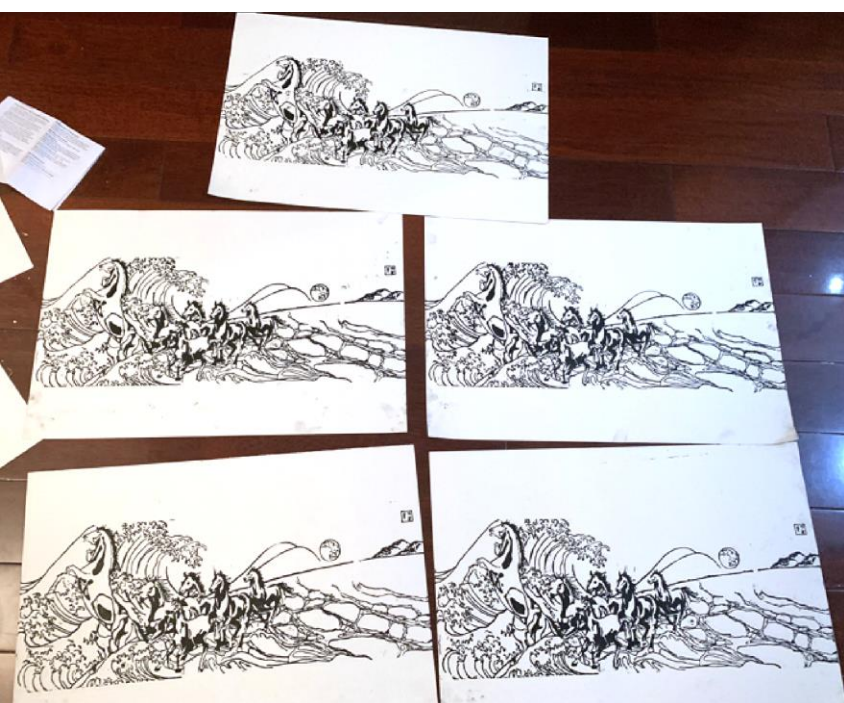
(Above) A picture of the trial prints using print ink

Before I printed the other 3 blocks to the cleanest print, I used the prints that are not clean for experiment to see how the colors apply and to practice how to make a clean print with the other 3 blocks.

(Above) A picture of the print printed using all 4 blocks. I also used a lighter blue watercolor to color right area to see if I need to add another block. The conclusion is no, because it makes the surface look very messy.
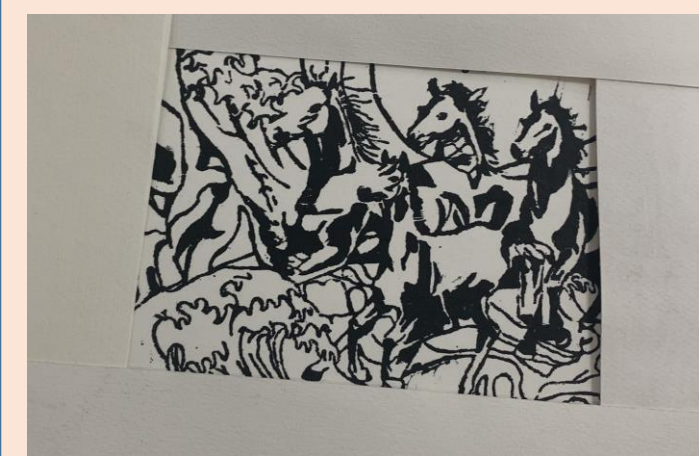
I made multiple prints to try to attain the cleanest print. There are a couple of improvements I made to prevent printing the cut areas, one is that I made the cut areas deeper, another is I used harder printing paper. I also washed the woodblock, and was more careful when I used the brayer. I also used paper to cover the areas where I accidentally applied ink to.

(Above) A picture of the cleanest print I printed using print ink

(Above) A picture of the trial prints using 2 blocks using print ink and yellow oil paint

I used yellow oil paint to paint the horses. The brown watercolor in the last print did not work because 1, it makes the black lines on the first block indecipherable, and 2, watercolor stick the board and canvas together once it dries and it dries very quickly, not giving me enough time to print. Oil paint on the other hand, dries slower, has a wider range of colors than the print ink I have access to, and also create smoother and brighter colors. Because I cut away more areas of the horse in the front from the first block, I had to use a paint brush to cover the areas that are not printed by the second block.

(Below) A picture of my own work

(Above) A picture of my own work

I tried to crop the artwork because I did not like the color and structure on the right side of the block. Also I only needed the horse and the wave for my objective, so the right side was unnecessary.

After I printed the other blocks, I decided to crop out the right area of the artwork, because I want to keep the wave, but at the same time only including what is necessary. Though yellow and blue are not complementary colors, they are colors that creates a increase in contrast when put close together. In a way the color adds to the intensity of this artwork, helping with the objective to showing power through the intensity.

I added more details and Chinese characters written in calligraphy to the horse in the front. The characters represent creation, as it is created by humans, and thus relate to the idea of how from the sea sprung the first creation of life.

(Left)
The Cambrian Explosion

(A final artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component)

22.5 cm x 30 cm, woodcut, 2019

The name The Cambrian Explosion is a biological term that refers to a time period in Earth's history where there a sudden explosion in the species variety on earth in the oceans and seas.

(This space is intentionally left blank to show how the beak and the neck forms a eye-path)

Excluded

(A final artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component)

25 cm x 60 cm, oil paint, gesso, 2019

This artwork want to show how vitality may be ignored. The imagery of the "green peacock" (its neck is not green, but colorful) with feathers on the neck that look like dragon's scales creates confusion. This imagery is chosen because the green peacock is a beautiful creature that is becoming extinct due to human ignorance. This imagery provides a contradiction between what exists and is ignored and what is legendary and is widely known, leading to the idea that vitality is eye-catching, but may be ignored. The neck of the peacock and the beak is a discontinuous, cropped neck that enters and exits the picture frame, but the parts included in the picture plain forms a eye-path that becomes a complete neck of a peacock, thus the name Excluded. Another reason for the name of the artwork being *Excluded* is that, when the rest of the body is not shown, most people in China will think that this is a dragon. However, this design gives the audience a hint at what the painting is really showing through the tip of the beak at the top middle of this painting. So now, the eye-path created by the neck and by the beak is what will guide the viewer to recognize what animal is really shown on the painting.

(Left)

Solar Powered

(A final artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component)

Circle with a 16 cm radius, watercolor, acrylic on wood, 2019

This artwork want to show how vitality may be subtle. This artwork used the imagery of cloud and ocean. I created confusion between distinguishing the cloud and water to suggest the water cycle – ambiguous because it is an on-going process with no clear stages, and it is vital because it supports life itself. This artworks shows how vitality may not be eye-catching, even though it is present all around us. The name *Solar Powered* is due to fact that the water cycle depends on the sun to function. Also, the white triangle on the artwork is representative of a sun dial, which also depend on the sun to function.

These 2 artworks see a transition from understanding vitality as eye-catching to understanding of vitality becoming more subtle

This artwork is inspired by the work I have done in my biology class. In my biology class I investigated moss and noticed that moss is very abundant when I thought I would have trouble finding them. This led to the idea of connecting moss with beauty. People don't usually connect moss with beauty, but like all weeds, it live and grow in places other plants cannot, like places where there is little or no soil or in soil with very little nutrient. Also, moss reproduce both sexually and asexually, which means they reproduce readily and efficiently, thus exhibiting vitality.

The design on the left shows bricks piled on top of one another, with moss growing out on the edges. This is a direct portrayal of what I am trying to show.
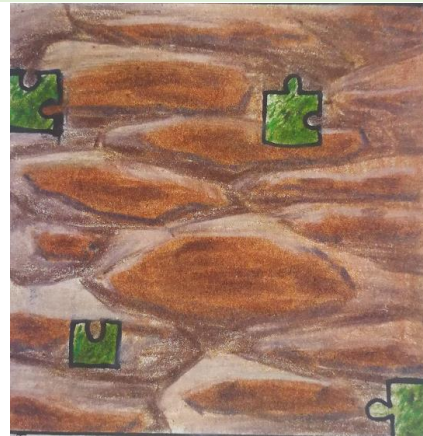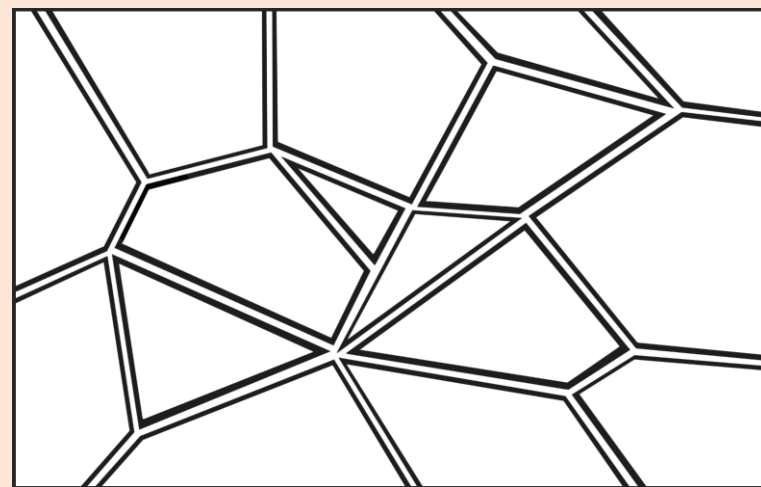

(Above) A picture of my own work

The design on the left shows a stone wall, with green puzzle pieces on the wall. Here I want the audience to notice the presence of the moss, and the puzzle pieces do make the moss seem abrupt, thus drawing attention.

Taking inspiration from the 2 designs on the left, I thought maybe I could use the idea of using different pieces containing moss imagery to make one artwork, like the puzzle pieces and bricks in the 2 designs on the left. I thought it would be interesting to put together a artwork composed of different pieces that are joined together to become one work.

(Above) A picture of my own work

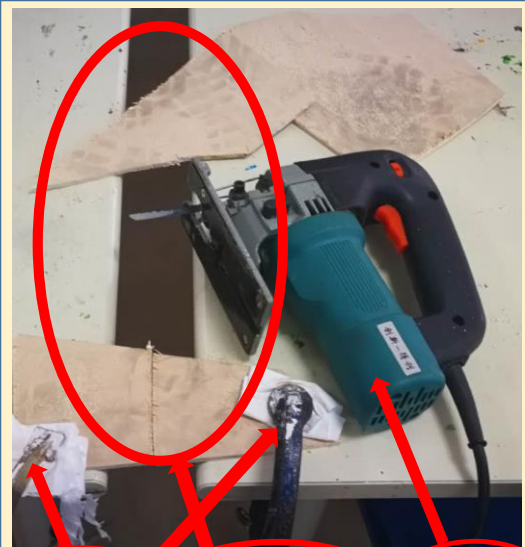(Above) A picture of my own design

(Above) A picture of my own sketch

(Above) A picture of my own surface exploration

This design will be cutting a block of wood into pieces and then arrange put them together again into a 3D installation shaped like a circle. The middle will be left open, so the cut, places will draw the viewer's attention. As for the surface exploration of the moss, I used acrylic and impasto to create the surface, the board on the left has a thicker texture not like moss, more like seaweed. The surface on the right has a thinner layer of paint more like moss.
The opening will also resemble the opening of a cave, and the moss will be lined around the opening.

The making of the artwork

I first cut a 30 cm x 40 cm wood board into many uneven pieces using a hand-held jig saw. Because the wood board is made of plywood, after I finished sawing the wood there are splinters on the side, to get rid of the splinters, I then used sand paper to smoothen the edges out.

I colored the blocks with white gesso, then used a glue gun to stick them together. I then used the method used in my surface exploration (impasto with acrylic) to portray the moss. Afterwards I thought that the white was too plain, so I added grey, and freckled it with white and darker grey to mimic the texture of stones.

C-clamps Gap between two tables Jig saw

(Above) Pictures of my process
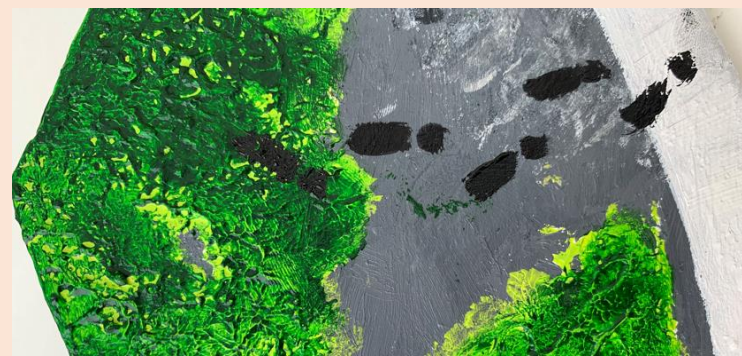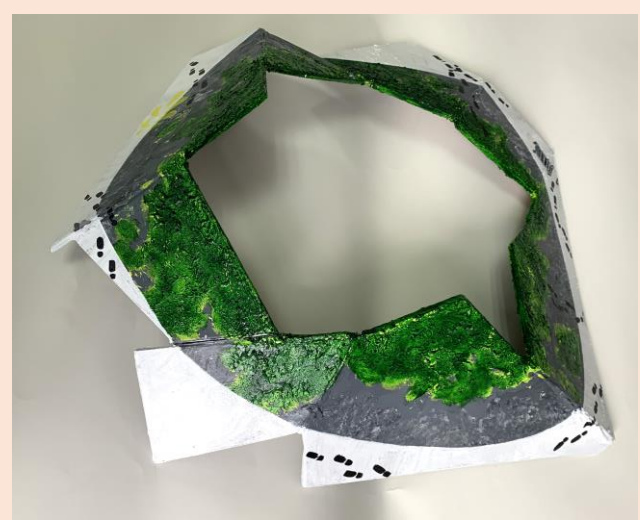
(Above) Detail picture of my own artwork

(Left) Picture of my own artwork

I wanted to add some inconspicuous idea or concept to this work, and so I decided to paint the outside ring of this installation white, and added foot prints all over the artwork. This is to imply that the white places are roads, the foot prints the path of the people, and since some footprints trespass on the moss without breaking rhythm, this suggest the inconspicuous nature of moss.

However, **reflecting** upon this artwork, I thought that the moss is too obvious. Maybe I can make the moss more subtle, because the idea is that though moss is inconspicuous, they are beautiful, so it may be best for me to portray moss as more inconspicuous.
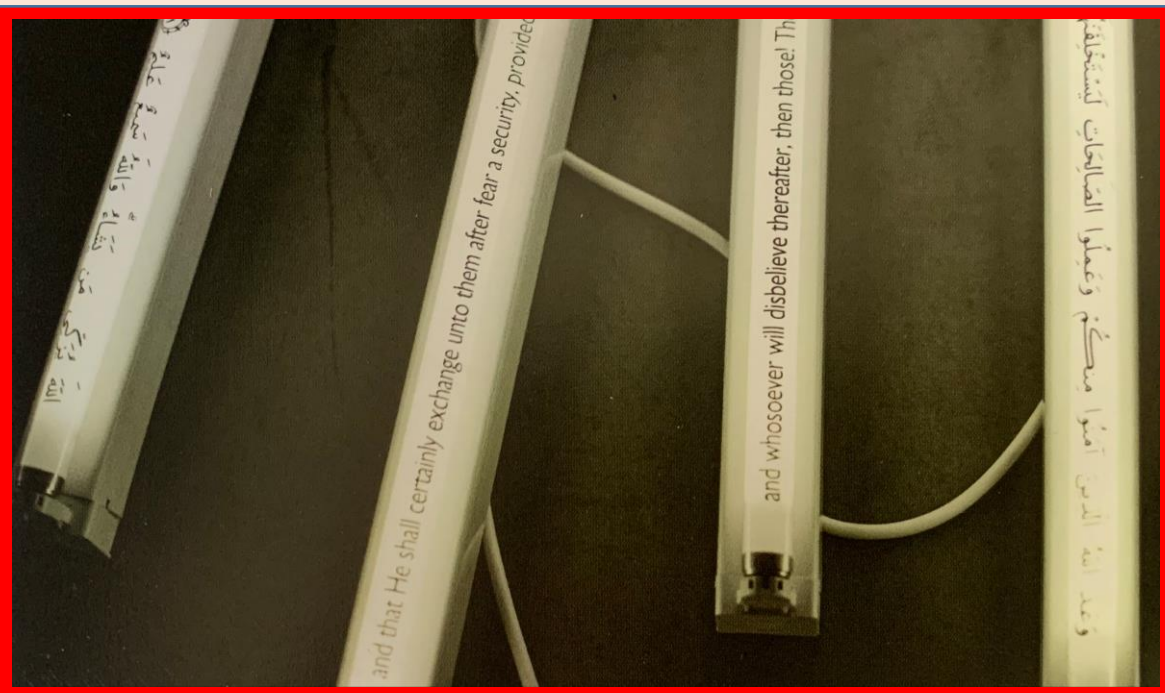
(Detail view, Left)
Artist: Mounir Fatmi
Artwork: *In the Absence of Evidence to the Contrary*
Date: 2012
Media: fluorescent tubes
Size: 80 × 90.2 × 7.6 cm

To find a way to make moss around the opening of the cave inconspicuous, I looked to Mounir Fatmi for inspiration. The artist wrote on fluorescent tubes so the writing on them becomes inconspicuous due to the strong light. The artist also mentions that "It remains imprinted in our eyes by a kinetic effect allowing us to keep it in our memory while projecting it on everything we look at. [1]" I thought this idea is very interesting. When strong light is present it draws the attention of people to it, and also dim out the presence of other things close to it, just as how the moon will dim out the stars when it is present. This idea is also perfect for my artwork, as my artwork involves a opening of a cave, so I can suggest through the strong light that the viewer is inside the cave looking out to daylight.

Because I want to use light, I need a source of light. I considered using sunlight, but I cannot manipulate sunlight so that it is as bright as I want it to be every time I need the light. So I decided to use artificial light. I went to the store to buy fluorescent light. This light has a flat surface, and light is coming from the flat surface in a uniform way. It is great for artmaking because of the flat surface. Also because this light is meant for the ceiling, it does not have a plug that I can use (see Figure 2), so I asked the staff at the store to help me attach a plug to the light. So now in Figure 3 it has a plug.

(Above)
Figure 3, picture of the modified wire

(Left) Figure 2, picture of the wire not modified yet

(Right) Picture of my own work

Now that I have the fluorescent light, I began to experiment how to make the moss inconspicuous.

Experimentation with light

I tried putting green paper to suggest moss behind a image (my own woodcut print) and see how it turned out. The right side is how the image looks through the light without the green paper. The left side is how the image look with the green paper between the woodcut print and the fluorescent light. But the moss is too obvious, and so I abandoned this decision.

Building on: "Further experimentation with light"

The oval is symbolic of the opening of a cave, and the viewer will be standing from the point of view of 'under' the cave

Further experimentation with light

I changed strategies. Maybe a simple design will work if I can make the moss inconspicuous even with light. In this design, the green was painted on one side and the black on the other, to see if the light and help the viewer see green through the paper and if black acrylic can prevent the light from shining through. In result the watercolor paper does allow the light to shine through and also show green on the other side, and the black can prevent the light from shining through.

(Left) Picture of my experimentation

I thought about combining idea of the opening of a cave with the design on the right. The opening of the cave could also refer back to the first artwork, because the opening could also be called the orifice of the cave. I would have a ring of green on one side, and trimming the ring of green would be a layer of black acrylic on the other side. The side with the black acrylic would be in front. This way, when the fluorescent light lights up the light would penetrate the paper, and show the green on the other side.

(Above) Detail view of my own work with lights on

The green on the other side is visible through the paper, and so I was satisfied with this design idea.

(Left) Picture of my own work with lights on

I have decided to make the opening of the cave a perfect circle that is not in the middle of the rectangle. Below I have put a compare and contrast picture of the detail view of the artwork with lights on and off. We can see that when the lights are turned on the green underneath becomes visible.

Notably, the expression of beauty has become more subtle for this artwork than the other artworks, with the artwork requiring less technical skills.

(Right)
The Cave

(A final artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component)

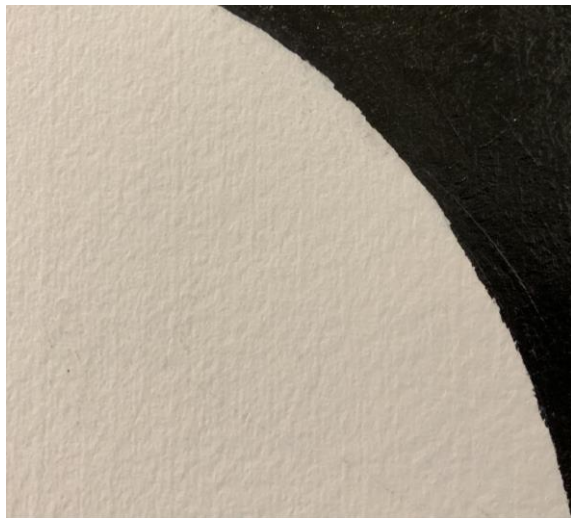35 cm x 60 cm x 3 cm, watercolor, acrylic on printmaking paper, 2019

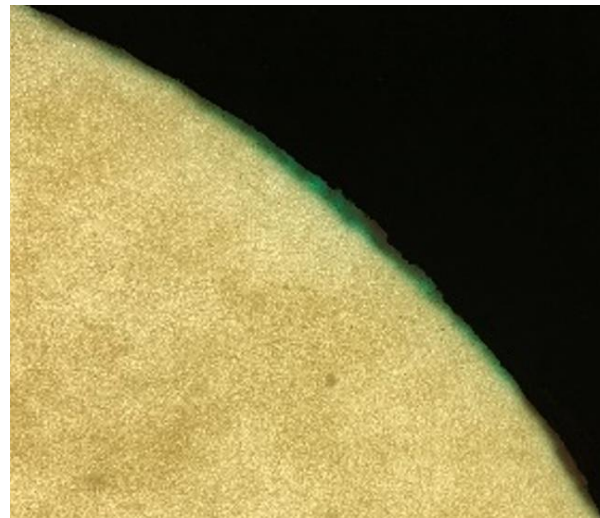(Above) Picture of the final artwork with lights on
(Below) Picture of the final artwork with lights off

(Below) Detail view of the final artwork with light off

(Below) Detail view of the final artwork with light on

This process portfolio displays a change in the expression of beauty from initially directly portraying beautiful objects to more indirectly portraying objects people do not usually connect with beauty in the end. As an artist, this body of work have taught me that, when used the right way, a conceptual idea can also be beautiful. Thus, now I am inclined to creating artworks that are richer conceptually. Maybe for my next exhibition I could start with the idea of how people trade beauty for another beauty, just as how I am willing to wear glasses (sacrificing personal beauty) to see the world around me more clearly (to attain greater beauty). Or I could even experiment on how to make a trite expression of beauty more creative conceptually, for example I could make a artwork of a flower bush where the flowers draw all the attention and cover what is underneath the flowers, but out of sight of the audience is the bushes that the flowers grow from, filled with creatures doing their own thing and ultimately forming their own ecosystem, which is vitality that is beautiful. I have also learned the benefits of finding inspiration in the work of another artist, which sometimes can lead to very creative results for a idea that was hard to express before I analyzed the artist.

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Screen 16

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Image Credits

Screen 1

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Screen 5

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