GCE A Level
Advanced
Art and Design

Fine Art
Component 1

VERITY

Total Mark 40 (30+PS10)
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Change and/or Stability
Mountains: change & stability

Nature, mountains show change with the highs (peaks) and lows (valleys) of the landscape. This can also be seen to represent a journey with the constant highs and lows. Another way mountains influence change is now they visually and physically change over time through processes like erosion, earthquakes, volcanic activity, flooding & landslides etc.

Water: change & stability

Water signifies change in various ways: such as the tide changing throughout the day, different types of waves & the changing weather that comes with them. Also, water has the ability to change its surroundings with things like erosion and rivers which can carry things downstream. The reflections of water also play a part in changing as they can change the way we see and interpret different things/views.

Spirituually, mountains are seen by many people to symbolise consistency, permanence and motivation. Mountains represent a stable landform, they change slightly especially over time, so just by looking at them they seem to never change.

Water can reflect/represent stability in various ways for example being a stable ecosystem for many animals. Also, although often there are big waves and ripples, sometimes water can be very still and calm which I think reflects the idea of stability very well.

Andrew Hewett:

Samuel Earp:

Eric Zener:

Eilidh Stewart:

Kurt Jackson:
KURT JACKSON

Kurt Jackson is a British painter who is mostly known for painting various landscapes, such as water/sea scapes, cliffs, and hills. This page shows some examples of his work. Jackson uses large canvases and a range of materials and techniques, including mixed media, print making, sculpture and written words, in both his plein air (painting outdoors) and studio work. He developed an early interest in natural history and landscape and his work reflects a concern with this and also ecology and environmental issues.

Jackson's paintings use a lot of very natural/neutral colours. In most of his paintings he enhances the colours to make them a bit brighter and bolder but overall the colour palette of his work stays natural and realistic. He uses a range of different mediums and techniques but a lot of his work is done in oil paint. I used oil paints lots in my previous project and I really liked them. I prefer them to acrylic paint because they are often more vibrant and also it's easier to create texture and marks.

The texture of Jackson's work is another thing that stands out to me. For example, in this painting the overall appearance of the painting had a quite clumped effect - almost as if it's been applied with a sponge. He is said to use a range of techniques in his paintings so it's not unlikely that this effect was created with a sponge.

Jackson's work reflects his interest and passion with natural history, landscape ecology and environmental issues. In his work, the focus is almost always on the landscape itself - not involving any other objects such as a building, or animal, or person (although he does have some work like this) which helps to convey his message/point.
This is a copy of one of Kurt Jackson’s paintings that I did using oil paints on cardboard. I think that overall my version doesn’t look much like Jackson’s original because I’m not really sure how he got that kind of texture and look to his work so I found it difficult to copy that style completely but I still took lots of inspiration from his work and do really like how mine turned out, even if it doesn’t look too much like what I was aiming for. I used a stippling technique with my brush to blend the colours together in a way that there weren’t any streaky lines, and to create a nice texture like he may in his work. He often uses sponges to blend and create texture so I am going to try and use them in my future paintings to see if they turn out more similar to him.

I was also a little bit off with some of the colouring. Where I’ve used yellow on mine, it’s more of an orange colour in Jackson’s work. I decided to spatter some paint on top because I’d seen him do that with some of his other work.
These are some photos that I've taken previously that I can use for the start of this project. Most of these photos are taken anywhere from 9 months - 2 years ago because of lockdown etc. I couldn't go out to take lots of photos specifically for this project so I've collected some photos that I think would be useful/well. These photos are also taken in a range of places (Lake District, Cornwall, Malta, Sarie) which means lots of different landscapes to choose from so I can experiment with which landscapes suit the style based on the artist I'm studying. Another good thing about these photos is that many of them contain both the hills and water so I can paint them both together as well as separately to explore that idea even more.
FROM MY OWN PHOTOS

of my photos, based on really like how it turned out. I chose wasn’t the best but quite boring - I think. However, I tried something new and it worked well: I used a creased paper and created a nice texture and really, and I used lines and texture which I like. Below is an oil painting of a landscape sketch but I believe that's a key part to the rest of the work. Overall, the water - I also think the one I used for the painting...
I wanted to do another oil painting with a landscape photo. I think it would work better with the style so I chose this one of some cliffs in Sarre. I like this painting a lot more than the previous one. I think the overall look is much better and draws your attention more, however, there are still some parts I don’t love. Such as the sides of the cliff where I feel like they look a bit flat in my painting, and I felt like the look/texture of them would’ve worked well with this style but I was unsure of how to make them look like that. I think overall I didn’t get as much texture as I would’ve liked. Although, I feel like the water part of this painting looks good and as Jackson has many paintings focused on water I should have a look at them and try to do my own versions with the water parts I have got.
I really like Kurt Jackson’s water paintings. I think the colour and texture of them stands out whilst they are still fairly simple in terms of there not being loads going on in them. On the right is a copy of one of his and it is definitely my favourite painting so far. I used a brush to do the sky and clouds and a base layer of the sea, and then I used a sponge to layer up different colours and tones in the water. I once that had dried I again used the sponge with some white paint to add the final touches. I also sprinkled some paint on top. I think the colours and texture of my painting turned out really well and there isn’t really anything I don’t like about this. I think I should definitely do some more because I have some great photos which I think would look really good in Jackson’s style. I also want to look at some of his paintings of calmer waters (like the 4th). I chose this painting of Kurt Jackson’s specifically because it still had a little bit of land/field in it and I wanted to keep practicing at that to try and improve from my previous paintings and I think it turned out good.
I chose to do a painting of this photo because I think it’s good to focus on the texture. I used pretty much the same techniques I used on my previous water/seascape paintings where I used a brush, sponge and toothbrush to apply the oil paint. I think that overall it’s a very simple painting but it’s very effective as the focus is all on the texture and build up of paint. I also liked how easy it was to do because there isn’t loads of small fine details and so I could use a much less controlled technique of applying the paint to the cardboard.

Again, I really like this water painting, this is from one of my own photos and I think it works so well. My only issue with it is that the brush I used for the white splashes had some red paint on it so it turned out pink, but other than that I like it. I think the rules of the bottom turned out alright as well which is good because I was worried that I might struggle with that part, but I didn’t. The white foamy part definitely is the best bit in my opinion because it’s got a really nice texture which I created using a sponge once again. I think this style works really well with water and landscapes.
LILIANA GIGOVIC

Liliana Gigovic's work mostly uses a very pastel or toned down colour palette which is one of the things that caught my eye and drew me to her work.

Another reason why I like Liliana Gigovic's work is because it's not incredibly intricate or detailed which often I have a habit of doing with most of the work I do so I want to try a style that is a little bit less controlled and I think her work would be good inspiration for that.

I also really like the use of texture in Gigovic's work, this painting for example is done in oil paint using a pallette knife to create the waves for the sea.
Below is a piece I did inspired by Liliana Gigovic’s style, once again using pastels. I used pretty much the same method of orange sugar paper as a base, using paper towels to blend the colours together and then layering more on top. Like the previous one I did, I also think I managed to use the pastels in a way which makes it look a lot like waves/ripples . So I’m really pleased with that. However, one bit I think I could’ve done better is blend the sea a bit more because I think it has quite a green hue to it from mixing the blue and orange accidentally while smudging it, but other than that I really like this too.
EXPERIMENTING WITH INK

There are some ink pieces that I did, inspired by both Kurt Jackson and Liliana Agovic. I had never used ink before because I normally like to have a lot of control over my work, but I actually really enjoyed it and think that it works well with my theme of work.
MORE INK

This first one I did using a sunset colour palette of mainly pink and orange because the yellow didn't end up showing up as well as I had hoped it would.

Despite that, I still really like how it turned out - particularly the pattern that was created because it looks like the reflection of a coloured, cloudy sky into the water.

The next one I took inspiration from some of the Kurt Jackson water paintings I had been looking at. I think the shapes/patterns the ink made and the colours I used complement each other really well, the green and purple bits to me look like seaweed or coral underwater which I really like. And also the spread of the top look a lot like spashing water which is what I was going for so I'm happy with that. I think this is my favourite out of the three because of how well the colours and patterns go together and it looks more like something than just some ink shapes on a page.

This third and final one was again inspired by sunsets, however I don't think it turned out as good as I envisioned. I feel like some of the colours look quite blocky and don't blend/zoom nicely like the colours in the other ones did. However, I do like the colour palette of this and I think that if the colours had blended together better then it would have turned out really good.
COLOURED PENCILS

I’ve used coloured pencils in previous projects, which I really enjoyed. They have a soft, smudgy quality that I think is really nice. I’ve used them on the page next to the photograph to create textures and patterns that look really like how they work.

SUNSET OVER WATER PHOTOS

These are some photos I have collected of sunsets over water. Most of them I took myself, the rest were taken by a friend for me. I like the colours of the sky in the ones taken in Sark, but I don’t think the reflection on the water is as good as some of the other ones that were taken at the beach. My favourite is the one taken in London, of the Thames because I love the colour combination.
I did this oil painting of one of my photos in the style of Livana Cigovic and overall I quite like how it turned out.

My favourite part of the piece is the sea. I used a palette knife to create the texture which is a key part of Cigovic’s style and one of my favorite parts of her work. I think my take on that looks good and I like the way I blended the colours together enough so that they do blend like in my picture, but at the same time I managed to keep it quite blocking and create the texture and more mending that I did. This is definitely my favourite bit that I want to take forward.

I don’t really like the sky too much in this though. I really struggled to blend the colours together well and had to go over and re-do it a couple of times because of how they hadn’t blended very nicely. I also think I made a mistake by painting the clouds as I did as I really don’t like them. However I don’t mind the sky not going too well because the key focus of this project is the reflection of sunset in the water. Although it is obviously key for the overall look of the pieces I do for this project.
I really like this oil painting that I’ve done of one of my photos. Firstly, I think that the sky is blended together really well, previously I have struggled when it comes to blending colours so I’m happy that I managed to do it so well this time. I also really like how the water looks. I chose to look at this style of painting and these artists that I have because of how freely they paint and mark-make as I have a habit of trying to be very precise and controlled when I paint but I think I managed to really embrace that lack of control when it came to painting the water and actually really like the overall finish and effect that it gives to the piece.

My favourite thing about this piece is the colours Blue and orange are complimentary colours, meaning they are opposite on the colour wheel. They work particularly well in this because they are the only colours - other than grey tones - so they are a real focal point of the painting. The amazing thing about this is that because I’m looking at sunsets, it’s impossible to get the exact photo and colour scheme that I want or think would work well together, so I will just have to hope that I can get more photos like this.
These are some more pastel pieces I did, but this time using my own photos. My favourite out of the two is the one below. I really like the colours and I think I blended them together well. I do like the other one I did, but my favourite part of that is the sky and so I don’t think it’s very good in a project based around sea and water. I have a similar opinion on the one below because although I do really like it overall, I think the water itself is a bit boring as there isn’t any waves or ripples to it. I think I’m going to have to find an artist to study that would fit better with the photos I’ve got, but I might come back to this style.
I wanted to do a new artist study because although I really liked the one I was doing previously, it was hard to find photos that worked well so I wanted to choose an artist and style that would work well with the photos I've already got and/or would be easier to get photos for so that I can do some more observational work. I chose Monet because overall I really like the look of his work but also there are other things that stand out such as the reflections onto the water which I think would be good to study as I haven't done many painting/writing on reflections of things other than sunsets. I also really like the depth to some of his paintings, I think it links quite well and reminds me of Hunt Jackson's, so it would be a good follow on artist study as I think I can build on what I've learnt so far in this project.

CLAUDIE MONET
Throughout this project I've been using oil paints when painting so I thought it would be good to use acrylic paints this time. The main reason I prefer using oil paints is because it's easier to create lots of different marks and textures whereas I find with acrylics that it's a lot harder and so overall paintings can look a bit 'flat'. I think that's the case with this painting, for example the rocks I tried to create texture and make them look more realistic but it didn't turn out how I wanted it to. I don't think the sea looks too bad though. Quite like the look I created, I think it gives off the sense of movement and waves in the water. I wish I was able to create more texture with the parts where the water is spraying up. Overall though, I don't love it but I also don't hate it.
MONEt INSPIRED ETCHINGS

One of the things that drew me to Monet's work is the depth that he created in his seascape paintings. I wanted to do some piece that focused on this aspect and I felt like etchings would be good because I could create one of my photos where there's lots of depth in the waves. (The photo I used was one taken in Sark). The first two prints (the white on black, and black on white) I did so that I could see the print clearly without a busy background distracting from it too much. I really like the etching, I think it turned out well I wanted it to match the waves, and I think the simplicity of it really helps with that. I also like how it works well with both colours; the white on black looks like the printed parts are where the sea catches the light, and the black on white makes the printed parts the shadows, and the negative space is where the light comes in.
I made some patterned paper using inks, which I then printed on. I did the print using white ink (on the previous page) and lined it but felt like the print wasn’t very clear on the busy background. I then did the above print with black ink which I prefer as the etching is a lot clearer, but because I used black ink to create the patterned paper, it has made the print look smudged in places, which I don’t really like the look of, but because I liked the idea of these pieces, I did some more ink paper but this time not using any black ink. I think what I really like about the ink paper is that it looks like a reflection on the water.

On the right is a print I did using blue ink on blue paper because I felt like it was a necessary combination to have for an etching of a seascape.
The bottom two prints are my two favourites out of them all. I used a different technique when making the paper where I put a couple drops of ink across the page and then lifted up the page and tilted it at different angles so that it ran naturally into various directions. I think that the effect of this worked really well because where the ink has run it looks even more like a reflection and a ripple across the water.

I think my only real problem or thing that I wish was different with these is that because I'd already printed multiple times and had to wash the etching sheet between colours, the ink doesn't stick as well in the later prints that I did, so some of the larger scratched out pieces look very streaky and not as solid as I would have liked it to be (like they are in the first prints I did where I think it looked a lot better), but even so I still really like all of these prints.
The above painting is of a photo of the sea that I took in Germany, based on Monet's style. I wanted to focus this painting on the perspective and different things/techniques I could do to make my seascape paintings look more realistic. The main one is the lines in the sea, such as the waves and ripples, getting shorter as they go into the distance. Obviously, in my painting, the lines aren't clear and precise but that's because I was using a palette knife and trying not to be too controlled, but I still followed the general rule of marks being shorter in the distance. This is definitely a technique I need to take forward with this project. Overall, I really like this painting, the last one I did was with acrylic and I think this painting shows I much prefer working with oils.

← (simple example of the perspective technique for seascapes)
I did a quick tissue paper seascape piece as I feel like the overall look it gives is fairly similar to that of an oil painting in terms of the bold marks and value it creates. I thought it would be a good way to practice the perspective technique and think that it turned out well. It was very simple and fairly quick as it was just tearing and layering the tissue paper onto the page, but I like how it turned out and think I did a good job of making it go smaller into the distance.
MORE OIL PAINTINGS

In this first Monet inspired painting, I chose this photo to do because I wanted to practice painting rocks to look less flat and have more texture. I used a palette knife for this and built up different colours on top of each other, using random mark making without trying to control it too much. For the water I used a sponge to create a different kind of texture which I think compliments that of the rock very well. I also made sure to blend some of the rock and water together around the edge of where the rock meets the water. This makes it look less like the rocks are just stuck on top of the painting and more like the water is flowing over the rocks. Overall I really like this painting and think that the texture of it looks really good.

This is another painting where I tried to focus on the texture. This time, I used a palette knife for the water rather than a brush or sponge which is mainly what I've been doing so far. Like with the rocks in the previous painting, I tried not to be too controlled with using the palette knife and more mark making. The main thing I tried to control was the sea being darker in the foreground and lighter in the background, for perspective. I also really like this painting because I think the texture of the sea is effective and draws attention and I think it complements the texture of the cliffs too. The one thing that I think could be improved is making the cliff and sea look like they belong together because I feel like the cliff just looks a bit like it's floating.
These are what I think are the key points of my study. So far, and some of the things I want to either take forward or improve on.

**HILLS OIL PAINTING:** I see this oil painting as a key point in my project because of the use of colour, which I think has then continued to be a key theme throughout the project. This piece focuses on enhancing the colours of the landscape, picking up on the natural colours and using them in a more unnatural way by making them bolder and brighter.

**SEASCAPE PAINTING:** This is definitely a key point because it is one of my favourite pieces of this study. The stand out thing from this painting is the texture and more pushing. By using different materials/techniques of applying the paint to create this texture, it adds more depth to the painting which is good because some of my other paintings (when I don’t use these various techniques) look a bit flat. For this painting, I used a palette knife (for the rocks), brush strokes and dabbing using various brushes (some soft, some harder), using a sponge, and splattering using a toothbrush.

**COLOUR**

**TEXTURE**

**ETCHINGS**

These inks are probably my favourite part of the study so they are definitely a key turning point for my study. I like how they combine something very controlled (the etchings) with something that is much more unpredictable and harder to control (the inks). My favourite part of these are the patterns of the ink and how it looks like the reflections on the water which is a good look and work well with the contrast between the controlled and uncontrolled techniques. I think I should experiment more with etchings because clearly they can be quite effective at giving off the look that I want.

**BOOK REVIEW**

There are two landscapes from different stages in this study. The first is from towards the beginning when I was looking at Kurt Jackson’s work. My main problem with this painting (and others from the beginning of the project) is that the landscape looked pretty flat and stand out but in a bad way. The bottom painting is one of the real paintings I did before this book review where I tried to make the rocks look was flat by using a palette knife which I think is really effective and definitely a technique that I should take forward if I do a painting for my final piece.

**LANDSCAPES**

**INKS**

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

I think my next step should be to partner develop and experiment with my existing etchings or even some new ones because they are my favourite part of my project so far. I also could try to incorporate multiple aspects of the project so far such as the inks/etchings for the rocks/landscape and see how well that works.
DEVELOPING MY ETCHINGS

I wanted to develop and experiment with my etchings but didn't want to change too much with the water and take away from what I thought was one of the best parts of them, so I photocopied the etchings and used different mediums to develop the surroundings (in this case, the cliffs). The one below I did using oil paints as that's the main medium I've been using in this project. I do like the overall look somewhat but I don't love it. I think despite trying to use the techniques I've gathered throughout this project, it still looks quite flat and a bit like it's just stuck on top which isn't a look that I like.

I then used some coloured pencils as I really liked them when I was looking at Cigovic. I much prefer this look to the oil paints and am really happy with how they turned out. I think that using coloured pencils can look a lot less like it just stuck on because where the green bit of cliff meets the water is some green ink and this looks even more like a reflection. I think I could use that idea to make the ink paper that I print on, and although ink can be hard to control, I can pick the colours from the surroundings and try and concentrate them in certain areas so that it looks like a reflection and the etching and coloured pencils work well together.
This is the photo I've chosen to copy for my final piece. I chose this photo mainly because it is similar to the ones I used for my etchings and because I felt like they were so successful, I didn't want to change the style too much as I feel like I won't have enough time before the exam to experiment with different styles. I also just think that this photo will work well with the ideas I have for my final piece so far: to print an etching onto print patterned paper and then use coloured pencils to develop the surroundings.

The vast majority of the picture is the sea so that should be the main focus of the final piece, but the buildings in the background add some dimension and depth. I think I'm more likely to use coloured pencils to do the buildings as I feel like it would be much easier than paint to do the small details. I haven't done any building work in this project, but I can use the skills I learnt from previous studies where I focused on buildings. Also, the main points of perspective and depth that I learnt from this project still apply.
I think that the picture I've chosen to copy for my final piece represents the themes of change and stability very well.

When I began to look at seascapes in this project (when looking at Klee Jackson), many of the photos I used or paintings I copied were of quite dramatic seascapes with big waves and lots of water spray. I was drawn to this style because of how well it displays the theme of change through the drama of it. However, when I was doing the Hiiiana Agonic study, I turned to using more calm and peaceful seascapes, like the photo I'm using for my final piece, which I think represent the theme just as well. The calmness of these seas shows stability and steadiness, but the simplicity leaves room for how it can change and become more like the early seascapes I was looking at. I think the literal reflection of water links well with this metaphorical reflection and change.
There are some ink pieces I did to practice the styles I could use for my final piece. Although inks are hard to control and will never be able to replicate, there are different techniques that can be used to create different general styles/looks.

The above piece is my favourite out of those. I used a pipette to randomly drop the ink across the page and let it run and create patterns, then I sprinkled fine salt on top which creates a really cool look once the ink has dried. I think I'm going to use this style for my final piece, using the same green/blue/purple colour palette but then adding splashes of other colours too.

For these two inks I used the same blue/green/purple colours but then I used watercolours to add more colour afterwards. I focused a lot of the colour towards the top of the etchings because for my final piece I want more colour around where the buildings are so that it looks more like a reflection. For the final piece though, I will use inks not watercolour for this as the paint will mostly wash out when the paper is soaking before printing.
ALBERTO GIACOMETTI

- One of the most important and influential sculptors in the 20th century
- Heavily influenced by classical themes (Picasso), and movements (Cubism, Surrealism, Expressionism), and world events (World War 2)
- The main subject of his works: human figure
Cubism is an early 20th Century art movement which saw an overhaul around perspective with a single viewpoint replaced by the use of geometric shapes, resulting in paintings that look fragmented and abstract.

Braque had a strong interest in collecting musical instruments which was often reflected in the subject matter of his art, such as in "Mandora".

In "Glass on a Table", the painting shows a glass and flowers on a table. The different shapes and perspectives could be said to obscure the subject matter, but Braque believed that by breaking up familiar items, he could get closer to a true likeness of the object.

"Scared Nude" by Pablo Picasso is an early example of cubism. Despite the overall painting being very abstract, Picasso's use of light and the pose of the figure shows his commitment to the traditions of portraiture. Picasso had major influence and impact on various different art movements but is most well known for pioneering cubism, along with Braque.

The distinctive red hair in "Old Bailey" is said to represent that of former newspaper editor Rebekah Brooks who was questioned at the Old Bailey (the Central Criminal Court of England and Wales in London) in 2013 for her involvement in the phone hacking scandal.

In 1922, Pochozer began to paint a series of young women that she knew, including "Morning", emphasizing the fall of light across the figures to give them a powerful presence. It was voted "Picture of the Year" at the 1923 Summer Exhibition.

This portrait of a young woman was like most of Pochozer's work, painted over a year. It is said to never have been photographed, however he did sometimes do preliminary sketches or rough oil paintings of the models key features, such as their face and hands.
The technical term for 'isms' is art movements, which is a style of art with specific common characteristics, followed by a group of artists during a specific period of time, or at least, with the peak of the movement being defined by a certain time period.

MANNERISM
1520s ARTISTS: Jacopo de Pontormo, Rosso Fiorentino
MANNERISM is characterised by artificiality, elegance and sensuous distortion of the human figure.

ROMANTICISM
18th century ARTISTS: Francisco Goya, Caspar David Friedrich
ROMANTICISM has expression of personal feeling and interest in the natural world.

IMPRESSIONISM
1860s ARTISTS: Claude Monet, Edgar Degas
IMPRESSIONISM is characterised by small, visible brushstrokes and emphasis on natural light.

POST IMPRESSIONISM
1880s ARTISTS: Vincent van Gogh
POST IMPRESSIONISM distorted reality in order to make it expressive of the artists' inner ideas or feelings.

1900s ARTISTS: Henri Matisse, Vincent van Gogh
FUTURISM distorts reality in order to make it expressive of the artists' inner ideas or feelings.

1910s ARTISTS: Umberto Boccioni, Giacomo Balla
FUTURISM aims to capture the energy and dynamism of the modern world.

ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM
1940s ARTISTS: Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning
ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM is characterised by the impression of spontaneity and gestural brush strokes.

REALISM
1780s ARTISTS: Jacques-Louis David, Antonio Canova
REALISM is a particularly pure form of classicism that can be characterised by things such as clarity of form and sober colours.

1850s ARTISTS: Gustave Courbet, Jean-Francois Millet
REALISM is characterised by subjects painted from everyday life in a naturalistic manner.

FAUVISM
1900s ARTISTS: Henri Matisse, Andre Derain
FAUVISM is characterised by strong colours and brushwork.

SURREALISM
1920s ARTISTS: Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte
SURREALISM can be characterised by dream-like scenes and symbolic images.

minimalism
1960s ARTISTS: Frank Stella, Ronald Judd
MINIMALISM art is often composed of simple geometric shapes based on squares and rectangles.

a brief timeline of art movements
FRANCIS BACON

Francis Bacon was a figurative artist throughout the mid to late 20th century. He is most well known for his raw, unsettling imagery and is responsible for some of the most iconic paintings of traumatized humanity in post-war art. He worked through various periods in art such as expressionism, surrealism, cubism and abstract expressionism, but he developed his own distinctive style inspired by surrealism, film and photography.

PABLO PICASSO

Pablo Picasso was a Spanish painter, sculptor, printmaker, ceramist and theatre designer who is regarded as one of the most influential artists of the 20th century because of the wide variety of styles that he helped develop and explore. He, along with Georges Braque, was the founder of the cubism movement. This drawing ("woman among war flairs") portrays his experimentation with cubism, and instead of the portrayal of the woman shows a form of neoclassicism.

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI

Giacometti was a painter and also one of the most important sculptors of the 20th century. His work was heavily influenced by Cubism and Surrealism, but he did produce work away from these styles in order to grow a better analysis of figurative composition.

NORWICH SAINSURY CENTRE for Visual Arts

"Sans sans fin" is a collection of lithographs, a technique which keeps the freedom and the spontaneity of drawing. The oil paintings of his which were displayed at the Sainsbury Centre, all have a very similar cubist style.
This portrait of Mila Rachel depicts the French actress Élisa Rachel Félix, commonly known as Madame Rachel. She was most well known for his nude female paintings but he also sometimes painted portraits, such as this one, despite portraiture being considered a lower form of art around the 1840s, when this was painted.

Ben Nicholson embraced international modernism and played a key part in introducing non-figurative art to England. This painting combined still life and abstraction.

Allan Ramsay was one of the leading British portrait painters in the 18th Century.

Walawka was a Polish painter, often referred to as 'the colour king', who came to England when he was 8 and went on to become a pioneer of the Avant-Garde movement. Later in his career, he became heavily influenced by the colour palette and style of the post-impressionists.

Ginner was a member of the Camden Town Group, a group of artists well known for leading the painting of scenes of everyday life in London.

During his career, Watts made major contributions to history painting, the mural revival, portraiture, landscape, high Victorian classicism, symbolism and the new sculpture.
PICASSO

Pablo Picasso is often considered one of the most influential art movements of the 20th century. There can be seen many similarities between cubism and surrealism, especially in some of Picasso's work, this is likely because of the different variations of cubism and the fairly relaxed rules around the characteristics and style of the Movement. In 1925 Picasso began working in a style deemed surrealism and although he is not the considered a surrealist painter, his paintings from this time made major contributions to the movement. Surrealism revolved Picasso's attraction to primordial, erratic and violent, said to be the material of the unconscious mind.

CUBISM & SURREALISM

Alberto Giacometti was fascinated by the aspects and ideas of the subconscious that were brought to life in the works of the surrealism movement. He joined the surrealists group early on but was later excluded from the group in 1934 as he employed a woman to model for him, this contradicted the way surrealist were supposed to produce a piece of surreal art.

PICASSO'S SURREALISM WORK

Les Demoiselles d'Avignon

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Below is a pen sketch copy of one of Giacometti’s paintings. His work often looks very crude-free in the sense that there are lots of lines everywhere making it look like he committed to the painting straight away rather than drawing/sketching it out and being precise. I decided to do a pen sketch because I feel like it takes away an element of control by not being able to remove lines and make a precise sketch, providing a similar norm feel.

This is a painting using acrylic paints and a ball point pen. It’s hard to know what medium Giacometti used for his paintings because there is limited detail on this part of his artistic career as most of the focus is on his influential sculptures. I chose to use acrylic over oil because I don’t think there’s much layering and build up of texture in Giacometti’s work, which oils would be best suited to, and I wanted the paint to dry quickly so I could draw the lines on. These lines, as referenced on the previous page, are part of Giacometti’s very influential style, particularly in his paintings.

THE PHILOSOPHER JEAN PAUL SARTRE DEFINED GIACOMETTI AS “THE PERFECT EXISTENTIALIST ARTIST HALFWAY BETWEEN BEING AND NOTHINGNESS.”

EXISTENTIALISM & GIACOMETTI’S WORK

- His sculptures have no defining features and nothing to identify with, making them perfect representations of existentialism due to the questions that arise to the viewer: Who are these people? What’s their greater purpose? Etc.
- The elongated and emaciated figures are symbolic of starved figures that have somehow survived against all odds.
- His paintings from this period, often of his wife and his brother, hold similar messages.
There are some quick observational sketches of everyday items/scene based on the subjects of Giacometti's works, particularly the collection Paris Sans Fin.

I think a way skill/focus of these sketches was getting the perspective correct which I think I've managed to do.

I used pen for all these sketches because it has a strong effect of the line and pen marked similar to that of Giacometti's style.

This portrait is my least favourite of the sketches because I feel that it is a good representation of who I was trying to draw. Giacometti has a lot of revealing in his more or less maybe this is an area I should practice more to improve my ability.

I really like this sketch of the window. I think that despite it being the 'messy' sketch it depicts the scene accurately and personally I am more drawn to it than the others because it is not as flat and still as some of the others.

They stand out more and are slightly more colourful despite still being two-toned sketches.

I think that portrait sketches turned out better than the previous one because they are a more accurate depiction of who I was drawing.

I think I should still do some more practice on portrait though because it's something I haven't focused on much at any of my previous projects but it's a prerequisite mine with Giacometti's work.
Existentialism is a philosophy that focuses on:
- the importance of the individual, of choice, and of personal relations
- the anxiety regarding life, death, and extreme situations
- authenticity
- social criticism
- atheism and religion

Giacometti’s sculptures in particular are great examples of existentialist art. The emaciated figures have no defining features and nothing to identify with. The simplicity and lack of detail asks questions of who are these people? What is their meaning? What is their purpose?

The philosopher Jean Paul Sartre defined existentialism as “the perfect existentialist artist, halfway between being and nothingness.”

Paul Cézanne was a French post-impressionist painter. His painting ‘The Card Players’ is regarded as one of the earliest examples of existentialism. Whilst it was normal for cards to gain observers and onlookers of the game, in Cézanne’s painting the men are by themselves - both absorbed in themselves details such as having nobody watching them, and the unopened wine bottle creates an odd atmosphere symbolic of most existentialist artwork.

Along with Giacometti, Francis Bacon is considered one of the best examples of existentialism. The painting ‘Study for the Head of a Screaming Pope’ is said by many to be a representation of a ‘human figure screaming into the void’ - which is perfect summary of the meaning of existentialism.
My last few projects have consisted mostly of landscapes and buildings, meaning I haven't had much of a chance to work with portraits at all. I decided to do a pencil sketch because I thought it would be the best way to get back into portraits again. I think it turned out okay, and individually I think the features are good.

I struggled most with the mouth as I feel like the angle and lighting made it difficult and I had to do it multiple times but I think the final outcome is okay. I also struggle with making my portraits look like who they're meant to be, so this is something I need to work on more.

I decided to do some etchings because I think it's a really simple but effective way to do portraits. I love how the shading creates lines and texture to the print which remind me of Giacometti and the strong lines he often had in his work. I think the etching to the left (on white paper) is the most detailed and showed up more...
These are some basic photos of my dad that I took so I can use in some of my work.

I decided that my dad would be the perfect subject to photograph for this project because when I was looking through Giacometti's work, some of the men in them reminded me of my dad.

The grey jumper and background are similar to that of Giacometti's work. I used his colour palette.

I really like how these etchings turned out. I think the photo I used was really effective and I think my dad is a better subject than Giacometti because the wrinkles add another effective aspect to the etchings. I think I should do this photo as a painting or as a pen sketch.

In my previous etchings, I think the shading lines are really effective and remind me of Giacometti's work. Once again, my favourite is the one on the left, on off-white/light brown paper because I think the muted natural colours represent existentialism well and complement the forest.
wire drawing

I wanted to do a wire drawing/sculpture because I felt like it complimented Guccini's work really well. Because he's such a well-known and accomplished sculptor, it was easy to draw inspiration from his work despite it being a different technique and medium to what Guccini normally uses. First, I did about 15 quick sketches using pen, of what I would then base my sculpture on. Of all the ones I did, this was my favourite and the one I decided to use for reference when shaping the wire.

I added lots of lines because some of his work has so many lines and marks it can be hard to distinguish some features. Different to what I normally do.

...quick sketch...

TIMED

1 minute
30 seconds
90 seconds
90 seconds

SKETCHES

QUICK

1 minute
90 seconds
30 seconds
90 seconds

1 minute
90 seconds

40 seconds

30 seconds

90 seconds
I wanted to try out a new technique and I think it's such a cool way of drawing. I've never really done anything like it before. I used wire for the first time. It was easy to draw out features. I've never used wire before, but I think it's a really cool way of drawing. I really like how it turned out. Although it isn't very similar to the initial sketch I did, that's okay because it is quite hard to control the wire precisely and I knew it would look somewhat dissimilar. I enjoyed making this because I haven't done anything like this ever before. I really like being able to try out a more simple form of sculpture, even though it did take a while to get the hang of in the beginning. I think what I enjoyed is that it's a lot more abstract compared to how it naturally be wanting to be exact and react with my unique, but you can't really do that with wire. So it was good to try out something so different to what I normally do.
I've done quite a few quick observational sketches so I wanted to do some where I take more time over them, and focus on the features close up. The sketches took about 20 minutes each. I tried to draw the features from multiple angles. I think they all turned out well and will be useful when I go on to do more portrait work because I am a bit more comfortable with drawing people and their features. I'm going to do a detailed painting next, before I go back to Caravaggio's rough style of work.

Quick sketches I've been doing this way is more familiar with the something, I would work on the spent so long on the face I thought was best to just move on...
Because I haven't done much work with portraits recently. I think it's good for me to do some work where I am more controlled and precise, even if it doesn't necessarily fit the theme style of the artist I'm studying. Considering how little practice I have with both acrylic painting and portraits, I think this turned out really good. I am most happy with how well I blended the shades together, and also how overall it does look somewhat like my dad or at least recognisable as him because this is something I often struggle with and although it can suit some styles well, I think this painting was best suited to looking like him. I also think I managed to do the eyes well.

I definitely think that the quick sketches I've been doing up to this point helped me to draw this out and paint it well because I was more familiar with the different features. If I could change something, I would work on the neck and jumper more but I'd already spent so long on the face. I thought it was best to just move on.

ACRYLIC PAINTING
This is a Giacometti style oil pastel I did. I used watercolour paint to do the background because I think it is the best way to get a background with the same style. I then used the oil pastels on top, doing the basic outline with the black pastel, rather than pencil, this is something I used to struggle with because I can be such a perfectionist and want to draw everything out exact before hand but I've become more confident with using more permanent materials and embracing any mistakes. I think it's a really good representation of Giacometti's style. I also did an oil painting which I'm really happy with.

Again, I tried not to be too controlled and precise when painting because I think that's the best way to capture Giacometti's style.

I think the visible brushstroke patterns in this are really effective and add a lot to the overall feel. I used a black permanent marker to add more, thinner lines once I had finished which I think although it's a simple addition to the face it was definitely needed because it looks much better now.
Francis Bacon was a figurative artist who developed his own distinctive style inspired by Surrealism, film, and photography.

His work is famous for its raw and unsettling imagery and he was a key figure in post-war art where he produced some of the most iconic paintings depicting the trauma and destruction of humanity at the time.

Bacon’s work can be used as one of the finest examples of existentialism in art.

Identity loss is an example of one existential theme that is prevalent throughout his portraits. The blurring of faces, the bold brushstrokes over the nose, and the disconcerting and distorted features means the paintings are almost unrecognizable of the people they are meant to be depicting, suggesting a struggle with identity. This idea can be seen in his self-portraits too suggesting he sees this identity loss as not only a societal problem but something he has to struggle with himself. For the paintings where the faces and features are more distinguishable, there is often a representation of unpleasant emotion such as pain or anger.

Some of Bacon’s paintings when humans to rebel, stripping the back the complexity and, once again, identity of people to show them in a basic physical being. These paintings can be regarded as his most unsettling ones.

One key theme in existentialism is the anxiety surrounding life and death. This can be seen in lots of Francis Bacon’s work, particularly his studies for the portrait of the Screaming Pope, depicting him screaming into nothing. The painting also shows him being trapped in what looks like a cage, adding to the stress and anxiety.

I really like Francis Bacon’s work because I admire his ability to portray such raw, unpleasant scenes yet still leave some aspects of the pieces up to the viewer’s imagination and interpretation. I was particularly captivated by his work when I saw it at the Saatchi Centre when I went earlier in this project. I’m excited by my painting in his style because although it goes well with and compliments Hockney’s style and work, it is still so different to anything I’ve studied before this.
This was my attempt at a Francis Bacon style painting. Because it's so different from what I've done before, I found it difficult to embrace the distorted features as much as in Bacon's work, so I'm definitely going to do another one and try to perfect that. Other than that, I like how this turned out and think it's a good first try at such a different style and I enjoyed doing it.

I chose to do a copy of this Francis Bacon painting because I really liked the colours. I enjoyed painting in this style because of how free it is. I like the contrast between some bold, colourful brushstrokes, and the softer looking blended parts. I'm going to try this style painting from one of my own photos.
for this painting I used oil paints on greyboard as I didn’t like how my previous painting on oil paper turned out. Overall, I really like this painting. I like the colour combination that I used, I think that the colours go well together and also complement the style of the painting. The overall look of this painting is much better than my previous one on oil paper – it has a better look and finish because the colours blend together smoothly without being streaky from the brush strokes. Something that I added to this painting is the swooping lines down the painting – I did this using a small amount of white spirit on a paper towel and smudged it down on top of the finished portrait to create a similar look to some of Francis Bacon’s paintings (not just his portraits).
Since looking at Giacometti, I liked his idea of just using one colour throughout his work and so I wanted to do a painting with that idea. I incorporated it with a painting in Francis Bacon's style to show how the two artists’ styles and ideas can work well together.

Overall, I really like the effect of this painting. I think it stands out from the other work I’ve done in this project and the style fits better to the idea of existentialism.

I chose to use red because I think the red and black combination portrays an often darker meaning and look of the painting. I was also inspired by some of Francis Bacon’s work where he paints the human figure alongside raw meat and animals. I think the red makes it look like she’s got no skin, giving it that raw meat look.

I want to continue experimenting with the red and black colour palette because I think it can be really effective for this project and the concept I’m trying to develop.
Photos

Here are some more portrait photos I came across while in this project. I tried to get lots of different angles for me to choose from.

I think the simplicity of the photos, with the plain background and blank expression, will work well with the existentialist style.

I like the photos where she's looking away from the camera. It portrays a sense of mystery and depth.

Another idea I had about these photos is using multiple in one piece. I think this could work well with the different angles and layers and is definitely something I want to try. First, I want to paint these using the black and red colour palette that I used in my last painting.
DISTORTED FACES

HENRIETTA HARRIS

I was really captivated by the distorted face aspect of Francis Bacon’s work, so I wanted to have a look at some other artists who use distortion as a key feature of their art.

Henrietta Harris doesn’t have one single distinctive technique. She uses to distort the faces in her art, but instead uses a variety of ways. Her work mostly uses the same realistic yet muted colours and the painting style is very realistic which makes the features of the distorted face stand out more.

BRIAN DONNELLY

Brian Donnelly has a very distinctive style. He uses bright, saturated colours for his portraits and they all have the same colourful smear/vignette effect which often take away the facial features.

JEFF HUNTINGTON

Jeff Huntington’s work shows even more ways in which you can distort faces in paintings. My favourite is the top right where he uses a collage-like technique to split the face and show another emotion in between.

These artists show there are so many ways to distort faces and I want to experiment with not only some of these styles but trying to create my own too.

identity loss

OUR CHANGING IDENTITIES UNDER COVID-19

The shock from the pandemic is a challenge to many people’s identities. The sense of not being able to go out and see our normal environments affects how we define ourselves.

One of the main reasons why I use the distorted faces is because I think, like in Bacon’s work, that it can represent identity loss. Bacon’s work focused on identity loss after war and I think this can be directly compared to current society and the effect that lockdowns and the pandemic have had on people individually and collectively. This is an idea that I want to continue looking at and to convey in my work going forward.

Coronavirus identity crisis? An expert explains why you might not feel yourself in lockdown

Overcoming Self-Identity Loss During The Pandemic Lockdown

Why some people are experiencing a crisis of identity in lockdown

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR IDENTITY DURING LOCKDOWN?
These paintings are based on some of Brian Donnelly's work that I was looking at. Overall, I don't like either of these paintings, especially compared to my Bacon study. I think they look dull and flat, and the one on the right especially, look nothing like who I intended it to. I'm not really sure I struggled so much with painting in this style but I think it could be down to the vast contrast between it and some of my work so far: these are meant to be mostly detailed and have a look of readiness to them whereas the work I've been doing recently has been a lot less controlled and at lot more carefree. I think it'd be best for me to try some other styles of face distortion that'll hopefully turn out better.
I decided to do a soft pastel portrait because in my previous paintings I struggled to stop them working so flat and so I thought doing a portrait in a buildable medium might help me to practice this. However, I really don't like how this turned out overall. I struggled with building and blending the colours and I think that because I was so focused on that, I neglected the face shape and features so it doesn't look anything like who it is meant to look like. Potentially, it might have turned out better if I hadn't used black paper but I originally thought that the red and black colour combination would work quite well. My favourite part of this, and the only part that I think turned out okay, is the eyes. I think I blended them well and they have a good amount of detail. I don't think I will be using soft pastels again as I don't think they worked well and I think I might prefer other mediums.
I really like this watercolour painting. I found it so much easier to build up the paint to create more dimension and structure to the face, making it look a lot less flat than many of my previous portraits. I spent much more time sketching this one out to get the right proportions so that it looks much more like who is in the photo — although at this stage of my project the person in the painting isn’t a key important feature, I think it will become more important as I develop my project towards its final piece. So I want to know that I am able to paint pretty exact portraits when needed. I also think that the look of the hair really complements the rest of the painting, it is soft and subtle enough that it doesn’t take away from the face and the rest of the painting whilst but also the little bit of detail makes it look like it works well alongside the face and not looking like it’s just an ‘extra’ or just stuck on. I definitely want to continue working and experimenting with watercolours because this turned out so well and I think it’s well worth trying to develop my ideas from this. Trying to incorporate more of the idea of face distortion is going to be my next step.
These are some sketches from 2 life drawing sessions. I used chalk and charcoal and did one using red watercolours.
FACE DISTORTION

I really like how my previous watercolour portrait turned out so I want to continue using watercolours and use them for my final piece too because I think I painted my best portrait using them. For this painting, I worked on and practiced the idea of face distortion.

The style I decided on was loosely based on some of the paintings I saw by Henrietta Harris. I really like how this turned out. My favourite part is the ups, I think that having the lips from the two faces layered on top of each other in the reverse way to how the faces are layered makes them stand out as something a bit different. My least favourite part of this painting is the dark background. I think that, compared to my previous watercolour with a light grey background, the black distracts and takes away from the contrast of light and dark within the face and portrait itself.
PHOTOS

I wanted to take some more photos of my Dad because I really liked using the photos I know of him before and now I've developed my project further. I think it'd be good to paint with these.

I think the reason why we...
I like the idea of incorporating different angles into one painting. It shows identity loss by being unsure and not knowing where to look. It makes you question what he is looking at and adds a sense of dimension.

This idea is similar to the previous painting I did where I took inspiration from Henrietta Harris. I really like this style and think it looks really effective.

This idea focuses on the idea of sight and looking/searching for something. This compliments the existentialist ideas and identity loss themes that I was looking at.

This is similar to 2 but the lines are sharper and less fluid. I do like this idea but I think I prefer the look of 2.

This sketch is similar to the painting I did where I layered the same photo next to each other. I think that the main feature of this is the lips because although the face is behind the other one, the lips overlap and stand out more. This is something I think I want to include in my final piece.

I think that for my final piece I will use a mix between 2 and 4 because I think that will give the best distortion.
I did another watercolour portrait using some of the new photos I took. Overall, I don't like this painting. I don't like the way I blended the face together at the nose - I think it doesn't look as good as in my other paintings where I didn't do this. I do like the background of this, I think to do something a little bit different to a plain background and thought that maybe the cloud/smoke like background would add to the identity-less theme because of the fluidity and lack of structure to smoke and clouds, but I think that is taken away from the main face and so I think I will just have a plain grey background for my final piece painting.

**Final piece plan**

In my previous face distortion paintings, the different faces have looked layered on top of each other but I want the faces to seem like they are blended together so, I will blend the top half of the faces together and then paint the outline of the face on top. But I will paint the jawline to give contrast to the top half of the painting.

I want to layer the nose and collar in this way because having some of the face behind others helps contrast to the rest of the painting.

The background of this painting will be painted a light grey because I felt the dark/black background takes away from the subtle contrasts within the portrait.

There will be parts of the portrait missing like in one of my other paintings and inspired by Henrieta Harns.

I like in most of the distortion paintings I've done in the development of this project, the lips will be a key feature that will be layered on top.
I think that flowers represent variation and similarity in so many ways. You can use the same bunch of flowers but have them arranged in different ways and each painting will look completely different despite the similarity between them. There are lots of different artist styles of flower paintings that I like to look at.

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**Symmetry in nature**

I observe symmetry in nature through the close-up detail, they show the similarities within each painting and flower but also the structural similarities between the different flowers in her work.

**Complementary colours**

Complementary colours in paintings show variation much more than they show similarity but I like how they can be used to create a certain atmosphere to the paintings and also make bold, stand-out paintings that draw attention.

**Hands**

Hands are an interesting subject for paintings because at first glance all the paintings look incredibly similar because of how all hands share the same simple features but actually there's so much variation between the women and men on different hands.

**Repeated patterns & pop art**

Repeate patterns, seen often in pop art, obviously show both similarity and variation simultaneously because of the unity in the replication of prints but the difference in colours in some of the pieces.

**Complimentary colour**

Paul Cezanne's still life is the apples that are in a lot of his paintings but they are displayed in different ways with different objects for variations.
Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder (1573-1621) was a Flemish-born Dutch still life painter who is recognized as one of the earliest painters who created formal still life as an independent genre. He started a tradition of painting detailed flower bouquets, which often included rocks and shells. His paintings are even and symmetric in terms of how the flowers are distributed.

Most of his paintings were painted with oil paint on canvas. His paintings are delicate and detailed and the overall painting have a soft and gentle look to them. The colours are vibrant and eye-catching in lots of his works and makes his paintings stand out. I really like how Bosschaert is able to create a different look to each of his paintings even though most of his paintings all include the same or at least similar flowers - the composition and layout of is carefully considered and it is said that he used scientific measurements to make sure the distribution of flowers in the vase was even in each painting.
I like this painting of Bosschaert's as it is more simple than some of his other paintings so I thought it would be a good painting to look at for the beginning of this project as I could focus in on the flowers. I decided to use soft pastels because the painting has a very soft look to it which I think can be replicated relatively well with soft pastels. Although I didn't have the exact coloured pastels I needed, I used the colours most similar and I really like it overall. I think I blended the colours pretty well and got a good shape to the petals. I really like the leaves, I think the light and shadows blended with the dark background creates a really cool look to it. I think that now I am going to try and take some of my photos in a similar style so that I can work from them and also do some observational work using the flowers I buy.
photoshoot

arrangements in Boschaart’s so I chose some flowers in these photos. There were several different ones.
observational drawings

I took some photos of the flowers to use going forward in this project but I decided to do some observational sketches whilst the flowers are still fresh. Some are quick lined sketches and others I spent time focusing on the shading.
Oil paintings

On Greyboard
These are oil paintings I did of some of the photos I took, inspired by Ambrosius Bosschaert. The one on the left is painted onto greyboard which is what I usually prefer to paint on when I'm using oil paint. I love how vibrant the colours are, that is a key feature in Bosschaert's work, and I think it looks very bold and stands out. What I do not like about this painting is how flat and two-dimensional it is. I found it really hard to blend colours and shades whilst I was painting because of how quick the greyboard absorbs the paint, making it hard to seamlessly blend shadows and shades. I think this limited how the painting could have turned out because I found that hard to do. I also don't like how thick some of the lines are, due to the lack of control I feel I had with the paint drying too quick.

On Oil Paper

There are oil paintings I did of some of the photos I took, inspired by Ambrosius Bosschaert. The one on the left is painted onto greyboard which is what I usually prefer to paint on when I'm using oil paint. I love how vibrant the colours are, that is a key feature in Bosschaert's work, and I think it looks very bold and stands out. What I do not like about this painting is how flat and two-dimensional it is. I found it really hard to blend colours and shades whilst I was painting because of how quick the greyboard absorbs the paint, making it hard to seamlessly blend shadows and shades. I think this limited how the painting could have turned out because I found that hard to do. I also don't like how thick some of the lines are, due to the lack of control I feel I had with the paint drying too quick.
Something I struggled with in the previous paintings was getting lots of detail on the flowers because they are so small in comparison to the whole painting, so I wanted to do some paintings of the flowers close up and enlarged to practice getting detail and dimension.

**up close**

I chose two different types of flowers to paint, to practice different styles. I prefer the one because there was more of a range of shades to paint so it was much easier to make look more 3D and less flat whereas the other flower I think looks quite flat and 2D. I used acrylic paint for these as it is a medium I am comfortable with and I didn’t want to be focusing too much on the medium I was using rather than the technique I was practicing.
I like the flower still life paintings I was doing but I found it hard to get much detail in the individual flowers which I think makes the overall paintings look not so good. The close up paintings I did reminded me of Georgia O’Keeffe’s work so I want to do an artist study on her and her work. O’Keeffe played an important part in the development of modern art in America. She has a unique style and way of painting nature where she simplified the shapes and forms of the flowers and the stand out aspect in most of her work is the elegance in which she paints the curves and lines of the petals which creates an intriguing depth to the paintings. Another aspect of her work which I love is the bright and vibrant colour palette she uses in her work because it helps them stand out. A lot of her work is so up close and detailed that they look almost photographic. I am going to take some up close photos of the flowers that I have so I can work from those photos going forward.
artist copies

For my Georgia O’Keeffe artist study, I did one quick acrylic painting, a similar style to the close up paintings I did a few pages prior, and a soft pastel piece. My favourite is the pastel copy, I really like how it turned out. I like the painting that I chose to copy because it has a really interesting range of colours and, in contrast to the acrylic painting, focuses on the lines and shapes of the flower so is actually almost unidentifiable as a flower. I like this because it puts more emphasis on the natural structure and colours of the flowers. I want to take that idea of focusing on structure and colour and develop it through this project.
Etchings

Following on from my Georgia O'Keeffe research, I wanted to experiment with finding an link and colour. I decided to do etching because it is a simple yet still effective way to simplify objects down to their basic structures. Layering image on top of a bold blocky collage really makes it stand out and I'm really happy with how it looks.
I did another soft pastel piece because I really enjoy using them and I think they are good for creating flower artwork as you can blend shades and tones together far easier than when painting. Considering how complex daffodils are, I think that this turned out pretty good overall.

I used one of my etchings as an outline to colour in with soft pastels. The print was using black ink on pink paper so the soft pastels were used to shade and add tone to it. I really like how this looks because it’s simple but effective and it was easy to build and develop the colour. I like this idea of using my etchings as sort of templates to develop and I think I will try and develop this in new ways, going forward in this project.

more soft pastel
Combining collage & line drawing

I really liked the simplicity of my line drawing and wanted to combine it with another successful part of my project, the earlier collage. In comparison, I think that this collage is not as effective as the one for my childhood perhaps because this less bold and bloody collage is too busy and distracting.
I thought carnations would be a good choice of flowers for this project because the petals create great lines and patterns to focus on and the overall structure of the flowers works well with the ideas in this project. I like the simple colours of the flowers and think they will be good to practice from.
Soft pastel and collage

Soft pastel pieces have been a strong point of my project so far. So I did one of the new photos I took another strong point of my study was my attempt to use collage so I want to experiment with different ways of incorporating collage into my final piece. I tried a collage using smaller bits of paper but didn’t like the look as it was too busy. The collage on the right looks a bit better with the different colours. I tried to do some soft pastel flowers on top but found that tissue paper doesn’t create a good base for soft pastel. So will remember that going forward in this project.
watercolour

I really like these watercolour flowers I did. I used the carnation flower photos but used different colours. I found it most effective to use coloured watercolour pencils and paints together. The one below is a watercolour painting under a soft pastel drawing. I really love how it turned out, I think that the contrasting colours look good layered together and I like the layered look that it has. I think it works well having the two flowers and they don't look too busy or overwhelming. I think this is helped by having a central focus point to the flower on top. I would like to try and incorporate something like this in my final piece, or at least continue with the idea of layering soft pastel on top.
Inks in preparation for my final piece

When doing the inks I tried to draw colours from the various photos taken through this project, focusing on pink, purple, orange, and yellow colours. I used fine salt to create a more interesting pattern to the inks but ended up having to scrap the salt off once the inks had dried because the rough texture made it hard to layer or do anything on top of it. But I still do like the look the salt created. I used inks in some of my previous projects and so wanted to use them again for this project. I ended up using most of the inks I had in my final piece preparations.

One of the final piece preparations I did was to do soft pastels on top of one of the inks. This is how I realised that the salt on them made it difficult to draw onto but other than that, it was pretty easy to use the soft pastels and it was much easier than onto of tissue paper which I stagnated with previously. My next step in this project is to go back to clothing and play about with how I can use what else I’ve done in this project to improve on my etchings.
Etchings for my final piece

I chose to do 3 different etchings for my final piece because I wanted to be able to play around with the layout for it and the more etchings I did, the more variations I could do. I chose 3 very structurally different flowers because I didn't want it to look like the same flower. I really liked the flower below because it has a very distinct pattern and repetition to it which not only creates a good look as an etching but the contrast between this distinct pattern and the flowing lines of the other flowers work well together.

The rose is probably my least favourite of the etchings just because I think the delicacy of a rose suits a soft blend between the shadows and highlights of the petal and this is quite difficult to achieve with etching. What I do like about the rose is the distinctive identity of it as it is very identifiable as a rose and I think it complements the etching of a close-up illustration which I would consider less identifiable as the point of that etching is to show the structure rather than overall, complete look of it. I think the two-three etchings complement each other very well and work really well together so I'm glad that I did all three.
practicing with soft pastel

My third etching was of a carnation close up and this is definitely my favourite of the three etchings. I think that it really capture what I was going for with a focus on the structure of flowers and I like the interesting patterns of lines from this angle that I chose.

having decided that I want to do something with soft pastels on top of my etching, I needed to decide which was the best way to do so. I did various etchings using different coloured ink on different coloured paper to see which worked best with soft pastels and found that it is easiest to etch the etching in when I use red ink as it blends well with the red soft pastel. So, I need to plan out the layout of my final piece so I can work out which ones I need to print with red.
practice

prints

as I established that I need to do a layout plan for my actual final piece, I thought it'd be best to do some mock pieces that I can take my favourite bits from and improve the bits I don't like, whilst making a note of what colours I should use.

This section of a print is an example of the bits that I don't like and don't work well. The paper wasn't stuck down well and ripped off/pulled away as I printed - particularly the tissue paper - so I need to remember not to use tissue paper and to make sure all of my collage is stuck down as best as it can be.
I really like the look of the bright orange paper on the pink background for my second practice print so I think I should use pink as my base colour for the final thing so that I can use the orange paper as I don't think it would stand out as much on an orange background like in my past one.

- Use my bold coloured inks rather than the more pastel, patterned colours.
- Print with ink that matches the soft pastel colours I will use if I'm going to colour it in.
- Use soft pastels on some paper but not all of it as I want to still be able to see the collage clearly.

I should make sure that my prints are clear. I tried a print where I left more of the ink on but I just don't think that it was as good as an overall look as when the lines are clear and precise.

Things to remember for my final piece:

- don't use tissue paper or thin paper as it will stick to the etching plate.
final piece layout plan

below is my layout plan for my final piece showing which colours I will use for each print, where it will go and whether or not I will use soft pastels to colour it in. I decided how I should do my collage based on what worked and what didn’t about my practice prints and this is an example of how my final piece collage will likely look like.
I am really happy with how my final piece has turned out. I like how it looks and I also think that it is a really good representation and conclusion of this project. The collage is good because the blocky colours work well with each other and also with the ink paper. I really like the different etchings together because they are all quite different and represent different aspects of flowers and their structure. I like the soft pastel flowers that I did. At first I was a little bit sceptical of how it might look with 3 of the flowers in a row and all coloured in but actually I think it works well and I like that I did different flowers with soft pastel rather than just focusing on one type. Overall, I really like the look of this because I think it looks somewhat complex because of all the different elements but not overwhelmingly busy. I also think that it displays colour and structure of flowers well which was my main focus for this project.
How does the philosophy of existentialism in art represent the suffering of humanity?

In my project I am looking into how the philosophy of existentialism is used within art to represent the suffering of humanity. I began this ‘isms’ project with a visit to Norwich Sainsbury Centre where I saw works from Alberto Giacometti and Francis Bacon. These two artists have had a key influence on my project, through both their visual style, and the existentialist themes running through their work.

Alberto Giacometti is well-known for being one of the most important and influential sculptors of the 20th century - he was also a painter, printer, and draughtsman, though he gained most of his notoriety through his unique sculptures and distinctive style. Of the different styles he experimented with, he is arguably most well known for his involvement with Surrealism, and his later work regarding the philosophy of existentialism.

He was committed to the Surrealism movement and was a member of the most well-known Surrealist group that was set up by Andre Breton. The group had a strict set of rules and guidelines on the correct way to go about creating surrealist artwork, these rules meant that Giacometti was eventually kicked out of the group when he broke one of the key rules by getting a woman to model for him. However, being removed from the group did not lessen his fascination with the idea of portraying the thoughts of the unconscious in his artwork and he continued to base many of his works on these ideas throughout the rest of his career. His fascination surrounding life, death and both individual and societal purpose is what intrigues me most about his work.

Giacometti’s vision of the world prior to the war had been photographic and he painted with a bold colour palette - similar to that of the Expressionists. A self portrait of his from 1920 (right) is a good example. However, the war changed his views of the world completely and he saw that “reality was poles apart from the supposed objectivity of a film”, he began using a grey toned colour palette for the rest of his life because grey was the colour “that I feel, that I see, that I want to reproduce,” the colour that “means life itself” to Giacometti. He used different shades of grey, tinting them with pinks and purples, browns and greens, never sticking to a truly monochrome colour palette but instead incorporating some of the natural tones. His obsession with the colour grey is representative of his views of the world post war. These views of the world were influenced by his involvement with existentialism, which is a philosophy that focuses on the importance of the individual, choice, social criticism, atheism and religion, and the anxiety regarding life and death - it questions a person’s individual and societal purpose. The philosopher Jean Paul Sartre defined Giacometti as “the perfect existentialist artist, halfway between being and nothingness”.

I find the philosophy of existentialism interesting because the key beliefs regarding choice and having no definitive purpose or role in life could be interpreted as having freedom and self-control, with people being able to do what they want in life, and yet it is almost always portrayed with dark, morbid undertones. Existentialism itself is very thought-provoking and I think the way it is presented,
particularly in art, is even more intriguing because it asks so many questions but has very few answers, leaving it up to the individual to interpret their own feelings and thoughts on the work and the subject - once again showing the individual choice and freedom. Also specific to art, I find existentialism intriguing because many artists, such as Giacometti, create works that represent the existentialist beliefs and the lack of meaning to life, whilst dedicating their lives to making these works and therefore giving themselves a purpose in life.

My favourite of Giacometti's works that is most linked with existentialism is the sculpture 'Woman with Her Throat Cut' (1930s) (right) which creates an image of rape and murder from intersecting blades and distorted anatomical parts. It displays a body laid out on its back, the ribs resemble some kind of trap or jaws, and the detail around the throat is said to represent the woman taking her last breath. Although it is not known exactly why Giacometti produced this, some speculate that a short story written by one of his friends about Jack the Ripper, and his own fascination with surrealism at the time, was used as his inspiration to create a piece made to express the fears and urges of the subconscious. This was produced before the end of the war so it is unlikely that Giacometti intentionally set out for it to be an existentialist piece, but the crossover between existentialism and surrealism, means that it is usually interpreted as, and used an example of, one of his most famous existentialist works made to represent the ways in which society is suffering. The taboo nature of the subject and the unsettling atmosphere surrounding the sculpture being displayed so delicately is not uncommon in Giacometti's work and it is one of the aspects which I find so intriguing.

In contrast, one of his most famous sculptures 'Man Pointing' (1948) (left) is calm and graceful, with a simple elegance to it. The elongated and emaciated figure, not just in this sculpture but in many of Giacometti's most famous works, is symbolic of frail and starved figures that have somehow survived against all odds - these delicate figures are mostly seen in his post war art, perhaps with the purpose of evoking thoughts of concentration camps and the societal destruction caused by World War II. It has no defining features, nothing to identify with, and seemingly nothing to represent. It makes the viewer question: Who are these people? What is their greater purpose? And, in particular to this sculpture, what is he pointing at? Questioning purpose is a key part of the existentialist philosophy and, although the idea of having no set role in life and complete choice over your purpose could be seen as somewhat liberating, most found the lack of grand meaning in life to be quite isolating. I think that this feeling of isolation and loneliness is represented so well through the haunting and feeble figures in Giacometti's sculptures and this is why they are viewed as some of the perfect examples of existentialist art.
Giacometti was most well known for his sculptures but he was a painter too. His painting ‘Diego’ (1959) (right), named after his brother Diego who is the subject of the portrait, is just one example of how his paintings represent similar existentialist meanings. These messages are portrayed through the dark colour palette and the scruffy mark-making. The dark background is lighter around Diego which makes it look almost as if he is glowing, giving an ethereal feeling to the painting - once again linking into the existentialist fascination with life and death. This painting is a prime example of how he uses a grey colour palette through his work. The messy lines and marks across the painting, particularly across his face, suggest that Giacometti is unable to create a precise, accurate portrait of his brother despite knowing him well. This creates confusion regarding his brother’s identity and produces lots of questions about who the portrait is actually of. Diego’s pose in this painting is similar to most of Giacometti’s other portraits and is like the simplicity of many of his sculptures, such as ‘Man Pointing’ - this is a distinctive feature of Giacometti’s style, being able to portray uncomfortable messages through a simple composition.

Alberto Giacometti is just one of many artists whose work focuses on the human figure and uses a style occupied by the fragmented and deformed body to represent existentialist fears. Another well-known, and highly regarded, artist who does this is Francis Bacon. Bacon is documented to have been a great admirer of Giacometti, having met in the early 1960s, in a cafe during a trip to Paris. He approached the sculptor and told him how much he admired his work. Many similarities can be drawn between their artistic styles and also their lifestyles; Bacon liked how Giacometti, despite his wealth, continued to work in his small, cluttered studio, and he also shared his lack of interest in official honours and success. They had a mutual friend in Isabel Rawsthorne which would have likely brought them together and developed a close friendship if it wasn’t for Giacometti’s early death in 1966.

Francis Bacon was another figurative artist who developed his own distinctive style inspired by surrealism, film, and photography. His work is famous for its raw and unsettling imagery, he was a key-figure in post-war art where he produced some of the most iconic paintings depicting the trauma and destruction of humanity - his series of Pope paintings is a key example of this. Bacon had personal struggles with his sexuality and identity which are features also reflected and represented in many of his distorted portrait paintings.

Francis Bacon is well known for his distinctive portrait style. A good example of this is one of his self portraits (below) which depicts a distorted version of his face, his features are clear but displayed in an unnatural style. The colour palette he uses is different for each portrait but they are almost always
unnatural colours for the skin whilst the rest of the painting is coloured fairly true to life. The main meaning I take from his distorted face paintings is an underlying message of identity loss. Particularly because this is a self-portrait, the warped features and unnatural colours suggest that he does not view himself how he appears to the world but rather he finds it hard to define his features and his opinion of himself. Bacon struggled with being able to freely and happily express his sexuality at a time when being gay was a criminal offence. Despite the law he stayed true to himself and was open about his sexuality but this led to a difficult relationship with his parents who found it difficult to accept their son's homosexuality, resulting in Bacon being banished from his family home at just 16 years old with nothing but £3 to survive on. Much of Bacon’s work, just like this self-portrait, portrays the confusion he developed regarding his sexuality and overall identity. These paintings are used as examples of post war art and so the distorted faces suggest that Bacon saw the war as having a huge effect on how people viewed themselves. Once again, this links into the existentialist philosophy and shows how the trauma that we face as humans will take its toll even if society makes it through the difficult situation.

As well as his distorted portraits, Bacon produced other paintings which are seen as a perfect representation of existentialism. His painting ‘Study after Velázquez’s Portrait of Pope Innocent X’ (1953) (left) is my favourite of Bacon’s works. The painting is a distorted version of ‘Portrait of Innocent X’ by Diego Velázquez (1950) (right) and is one of around fifty variants that Bacon did of Velázquez’s original. It depicts a human figure screaming into the void, his voice is silenced by the dark colours and his washed-out, grey toned skin. His hands are clasped tightly onto the chair, rather than being elegantly poised like in Velázquez’s. With streaking lines across the painting that swoop out towards the bottom and the glowing white of his clothes, there is an ethereal feeling to the piece. As well, the gold lines hint at the idea of a cage, suggesting being trapped, which is interesting because a key point of existentialism is that people have control and choice over their own lives and purpose, but this painting has a feeling of claustrophobia which suggests that this much choice and lack of set role and purpose can be so daunting that you can become trapped by the fear of it. I also like how it pushes social boundaries because important figures in society, like the Pope, are rarely displayed in such a harsh manner, it suggests that these issues affect everyone - regardless of their position in society. It also links back to the existentialist beliefs on questioning the purpose of religion. And, although the Pope is
the subject of this, the screaming expression and blurred brushstrokes create an air of anonymity which gives a more universal message rather than being personally directed to someone specific and also continues the theme of identity loss and confusion seen throughout Bacon's work. Bacon's choice to portray the Pope like this and disregard the negative opinions that some might have of it is something that makes me like his work even more and I don't think this series of paintings would be as effective and intriguing if the person sitting in the chair was unknown or unidentifiable to the viewer.

One of the other interesting paintings from Bacon's Pope series is 'Figure with Meat' (1954) (right). It depicts the Pope sitting in the same position, this time not screaming, with his hands still gripping the chair. In this painting, the background suggests he is sitting in a dark, empty room with just himself, the chair, and the two carcasses. There are many different ways to interpret the meaning behind the raw meat but I think it represents a counter argument to the existentialist suggestion of freedom in life. Animals being reared for meat do not get the leisure of choosing their life path and instead their destiny is decided for them. The carcasses could be there to show that every life ends the same regardless of how it is played out - so, is it possible to have complete control over your life if it will still have the same inevitable ending? No matter how this painting is interpreted, it is almost certain to instigate thoughts of death to everyone who sees it. I think this is interesting because the painting carries a religious meaning with the Pope being such a key feature, so including the discussion on death enhances this underlying religious message. These key themes of uncertainty surrounding death, questioning purpose, and religion are some of the main themes in existentialism so it is clear why Bacon's work, and especially his Pope series, is praised for how he uses existentialism to represent the struggles and questions in society.

There are some obvious differences between Alberto Giacometti and Francis Bacon's work, such as their use of different mediums because although Giacometti did produce many paintings, his most famous pieces are sculptures. A stylistic difference between the two artists is how they handle details and features. Giacometti rarely incorporates the features into his sculptures and instead focuses on overall form whilst using the simplicity to help convey his message, whereas Bacon uses the facial features to add extra description to his paintings - such as in the screaming Pope painting.

However, in general I think there are many similarities between Giacometti and Bacon. When comparing 'Man Pointing' and 'Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X', it is clear how both artists utilise the power of a simple composition when aiming to portray a strong underlying message in their work, a man standing and pointing an a man sat in a chair are scenes that we come across in everyday life and are quite simple but both artists depict it in a way to have a much deeper philosophical meaning. They also both have the same message throughout their work when they interpret the ‘freedom’ aspect of existentialism as daunting and isolating, and they question individual identity through their distorted or missing features.

One of the reasons why I was fascinated by existentialist art is because a lot of it was made post war as a way to express how society was affected by the trauma and devastation. In recent times, the Coronavirus pandemic has caused mass lockdowns and drastic changes to both individual lifestyle
and how we function as a society. I felt like there were many similarities to be made between how the state of humanity is portrayed in these examples of post war existentialist art by Giacometti and Bacon, compared to current society. For example, the paintings question the purpose of life and the role that individuals have in society, queries that will resonate with the many people who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. Bacon's painting 'Figure with Meat' tackled the subject of death which is such a sensitive topic to so many in society because of losing loved ones from the virus. Also seen in both their work, identity loss is something that very few have been lucky not to struggle with throughout the past couple of years.

I want to take what I've learnt from Alberto Giacometti and Francis Bacon's work and be able to represent the theme of identity loss in my project's final piece. I plan on taking inspiration from Bacon's distinctive style of distorted faces and features and apply it to my own work in my own style, to develop a way in which I can convey the idea of struggling with and questioning identity that I think is such a common issue in current society. I like Giacometti's use of a simple composition to represent his existentialist ideas so I will take some simple portrait photos to use and won't over-complicate them. Another aspect that I would like to play around with is a bold colour palette, similar to how Giacometti strictly uses grey in his work - I think red would work well for a portrait because it would resemble raw meat, similar to Bacon's painting 'Figure with Meat'. I also think that this idea of representing a person in this form dehumanises them slightly, and ultimately takes away their complete identity which is my goal for this final piece.

References


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