



Pearson

# GCE A Level Art and Design

**Fine Art  
Component 2**

**ROXANNE**

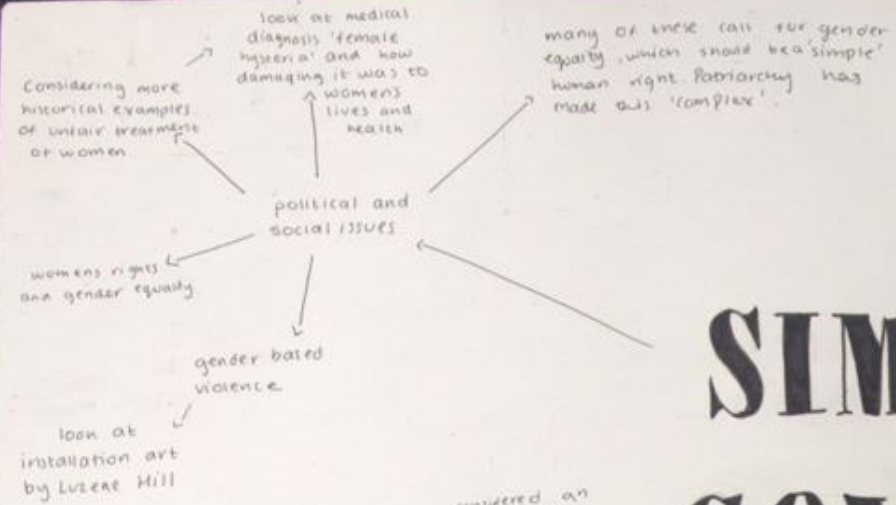
**Total Mark 47**

	<b>A01 Develop</b>	<b>A02 Explore and Select</b>	<b>A03 Record</b>	<b>A04 Realise</b>
<b>Mark</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Performance Level</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
			<b>Total out of 72</b>	<b>47</b>

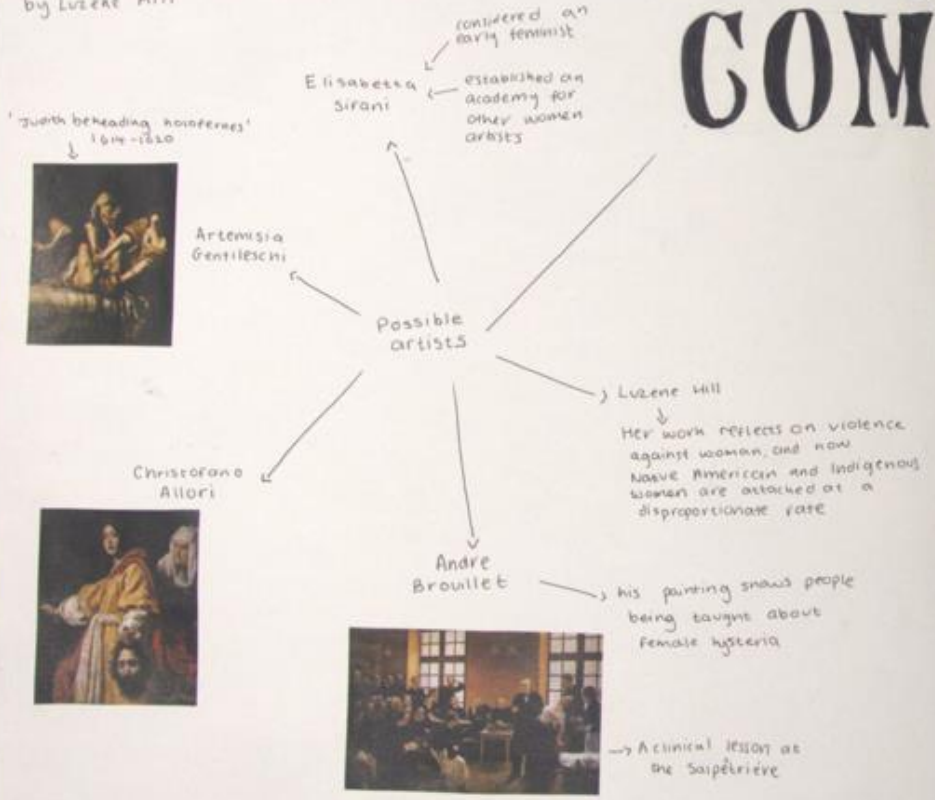
# Examiner Commentary

Roxanne begins to demonstrate some highly inventive experimentation in her ESA, taking photographs and making drawings that explore emotional states through body language. Her experiments inspired by Munch are coherent, creative and hint at original and independent possibilities for an outcome. Ultimately, she plays safe with her approach to the final outcome, which is nevertheless ambitious in scale and intent. The development work for a large portrait of a girl in a red dress is purposeful but somewhat repetitive. In this instance control over the formal elements and observational skills show qualities that are more competent than confident and assured, without the sensitivity and refined qualities needed to reach Performance Level 5. Overall achievement is high Performance Level 4.





# SIMPLE OR COMPLEX



Natasha O'Hare as Mrs Wecolless in 'Sherlock: The Abominable Bride'



Pearl (2022) Dir. T. West



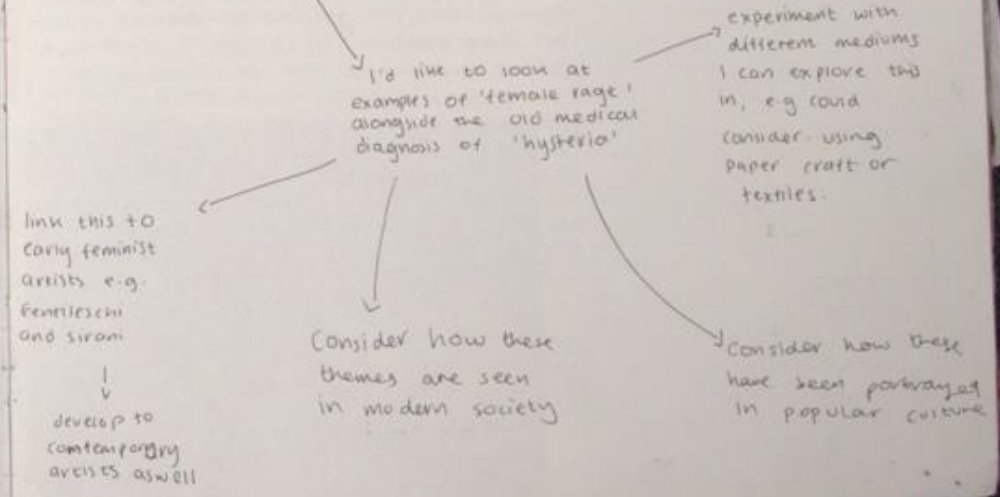
Gone Girl (2014) Dir. David Fincher

examples of rage/hysteria in pop culture

Sharp objects (2018) Dir. Jean-Marc Vallée



Gillian Flynn



# Artemisia Gentileschi



Artemisia Gentileschi was an Italian Baroque painter between 1593-1656. She began producing work aged fifteen, and is considered one of the most accomplished seventeenth century artists. I wanted to study Gentileschi in the first instance as her work encompassed a range of ideas that fit with my project. Firstly, her work might appear fairly simple in terms of composition, however the themes and messages embedded within the work are complex in idea and nature. The overall idea for the starting point of my project is to consider female rage and hysteria. Both of these themes are discussed by Gentileschi within her paintings, and she is considered by many art critics as a female genius ahead of her peers. It is also important to consider her life events when analyzing Gentileschi's art. The story of Gentileschi's rape has defined her way of working, and also how historians talk about her today.



At only 17, Artemisia was raped by the painter Agostino Tassi. This followed an infamous trial in 1612, where Gentileschi was subject to grueling questions and torture. She was found guilty, however no punishment was enforced, this injustice becoming closely intertwined with her artistic production. Her story and subsequent artworks align with an exploration of female rage, as this is defined as a response to things gone wrong with the world. I personally really like Artemisia's work. This is largely because I find the combination of her composition style with the subject matter very interesting. She does well to ensure that her message is being conveyed effectively.



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# Gentile & Chi

## 'Judith Beheading Holofernes'

1614-1620

This work by Gentileschi is one of her most iconic. It depicts a woman, Judith, beheading her warrior, Holofernes. She moves expert use of lighting to make the figures stand out on the canvas. The background appears to have been washed out. In what I believe to be an attempt to remove any distraction from the subject, and I think she does this well. This allows the highlighting of the most important message the painting is conveying, and being that women will not sit idle while their abusers walk free. Furthermore, to keep the viewer's eye moving she uses the rule of thirds to prevent them growing certain areas or figures together, but forcing the viewer to view the painting as a whole. These techniques I think present the women as a powerful force, and the brutality gruesome nature of the piece reinforces the horrific reality of what Judith experienced as Holoferne's hand. You can almost feel the rage coming from the painting as Judith brings her about to justice.



## 'Jael and Sisera' 1620

This oil on canvas depicts the moment in which a woman, Jael, is about to kill Sisera, a defeated commander. It is a biblical story, and follows Gentileschi's habit of painting powerful women doling out punishment and justice to evil men. The composition style in this painting is really interesting as Gentileschi uses a variety of composition techniques. She uses overlapping and places the two figures slightly over each other to make the eye move from one element to the other easily. She also places the figures off-center, expertly balancing the composition. I also think it is arranged in the golden spiral in terms of color palette. I've noticed that she uses the primary colors yellow, red and blue for the clothing. These are very bright hues which allow a stunning contrast against the blurred out background, lifting the figures off of the canvas. I really like the overall aesthetic of the painting and I would like to utilize some of these techniques in later compositions.





# Composition Ideas

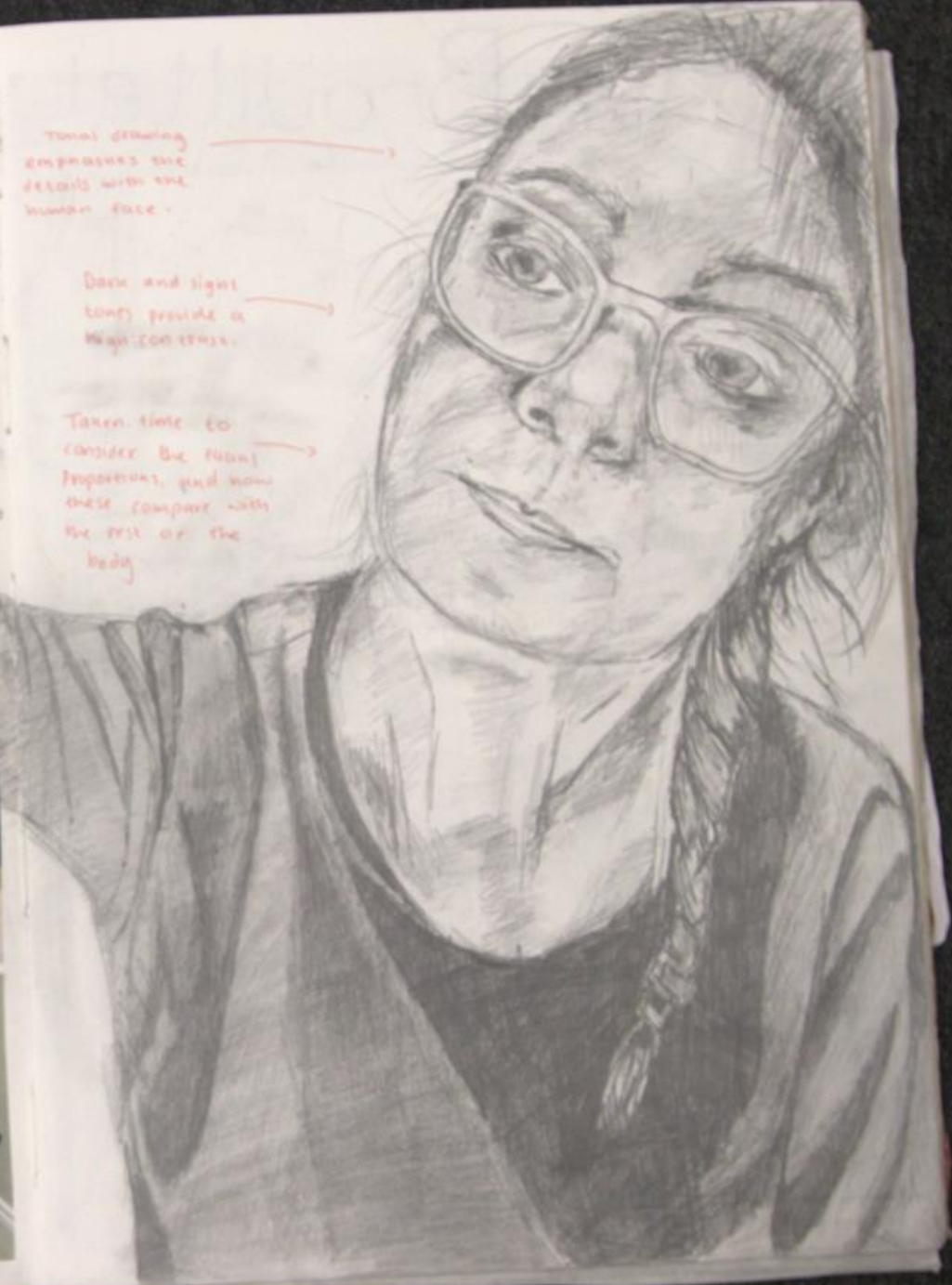
In the style of Artemisia Gentileschi. Some are taken inspired by her portraits of people committing acts such as painting or writing. Others are inspired by her more violent pieces. We taken pictures of people seeming to partake in violent acts without using physical weapons, and I think these are interesting as I could use them as inspiration for future developments. I've worked from one of the photos as a further development using a graphite pencil. I chose to do this in the first instance as I wanted to focus on the smaller details and shadows for the first sustained drawing of my project.



Tonal drawing emphasizes the details with the human face.

Dark and light tones provide a high contrast.

Taken time to consider the facial proportions, and how these compare with the rest of the body.



# Andre Brouillet

and his exploration of 'hysteria'



I was reading an article on arsy.net about 'The dark side of Surrealism that Explores women's hysteria', and I come across this piece by Andre Brouillet called 'A clinical lesson at the Salpêtrière'. It shows the neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot giving a clinical lesson to a group of postgraduate students about 'hysteria', a term that isn't used in medical diagnoses today. It was once applied to a wide range of mental and physical symptoms, primarily in women. Even the name itself is strangely gendered with 'hysteria' deriving from an ancient Greek word for 'uterus'. The study of hysteria was popularised by Jean-Martin Charcot, who is portrayed in this painting, and he set up clinics in Paris. Charcot would experiment on these women he deemed hysterical, and his research became a touchstone for Sigmund Freud's work, and the founding principles of the Surrealist movement. This painting is large - 290cm x 430cm - and is painted in bright, contrasting orange and blue/black hues. The figures are all faced towards the woman they are observing, and the eye-line is therefore directed towards her presence. I believe the artist intends for the 'hysterical' woman to be the main focal point of the piece. In response to this I've taken some photos of a person in a similar pose to the woman in Brouillet's painting. I've done this in a public space to highlight the absurdity of a large group of people observing a vulnerable person.







Represent complicated movements

The page to the left is in response to the prompt 'represent complicated movement'. I referenced one of the pictures I took in response to Andre Breuer's which shows a woman falling from 'hysteria', and this movement can be described as complicated.



## Giacomo Balla

The 'represent complicated movement' prompt inspired me to create a piece that represented the movement of a person falling. The idea of using lots of random shapes and lines reminded me of this piece of work by Giacomo Balla. It is called 'Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash' and studies the small dog in motion. It falls in line with the themes that are recurring throughout his works including a depiction of light, movement and speed. I think this idea is really interesting, and I will take this forward in my work by experimenting with how light and movement interact. I could do this by trying out the 'Nocturn' painting technique which allows you to experiment with how light and dark tones interact.





Processed using felt pen  
and colour pencil  
together

Black colour  
in pen

Shading  
and details  
with pencil as  
I have more  
control with  
this



Charcoal tonal  
drawing experimenting  
with shading and  
depth



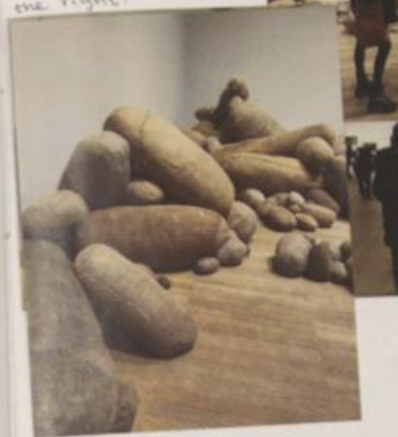


## Magdalena Abakanowicz



As a class, we visited the Tate Modern to see the exhibition 'Magdalena Abakanowicz: Every Tangle of Thread And Rope'. Abakanowicz creates huge sculptures from woven fibre that are ambiguous and organic. Her sculptures are brought together in a 64-metre long gallery space, allowing the viewer to move between her work and experience it at a close proximity. This means you are able to create a fuller understanding of her work; the themes, and the time and effort put into each sculpture. Abakanowicz's work maintains a strong connection to the natural world, focusing largely on the biological and organic matter of life. The idea of a fibrous structure relates to her use of textile fibres, but also her subject matter. We as humans have nerves, vein canals, muscles and genetic codes that make up our living organism, humans are also in a sense, fibrous structures. She discusses how 'the rope to me is like a petrified organism, like a muscle devoid of activity. Moving it, changing its position and arrangement, touching it, I can learn its secrets and the multitude of meanings... It carries its own story within itself, and contributes this to its surroundings. The work by Abakanowicz links to 'simple and complex' in several ways. It is complex in its themes and message, which balances well with the simple shapes used for the sculptures.

One of the areas in the exhibition is called 'Invented Anatomy'. She used hessian and sisal to make these increasingly figurative sculptures which I have included below and to the right.



This series of ambiguous forms titled 'Embryology' made from a huge variety of fibres are made to be round organic masses. Whilst Abakanowicz does not consider herself a feminist, her work has been interpreted by many as emblematic of female imagery. I think that the sketches framed on the wall are particularly embryonic resembling a fetus in a womb or an egg. These themes tie into my ideas of rage and hysteria as one of the shocking 'treatments' for hysteria were leeches on the abdomen to reduce blood in the womb. I might use this visual theme in my work by including embryonic shapes as an abstract element to a more developed, complex outcome.









# EDVARD MUNCH

Following my response to Magdalena Abakanowicz, I was looking at the circular shapes she uses and they somewhat reminded me of the style of working by Edvard Munch. Munch was a Norwegian painter who worked throughout the expressionist, symbolism and post-impressionist periods. The reason I was inspired was not only due to the circular shapes, but also the idea of a fetus being trapped within a womb. This visual idea reminded me of Munch's style as the way in which he draws the backgrounds and shadows creates the illusion that the person/figure is trapped or cocooned within the painting. Furthermore, Munch's work is predominantly concerned with matters of human mortality such as chronic illness, sexual liberation and religious aspiration; these themes all link into the ideas surrounding rage and hysteria. I think that these themes of chronic illness and sexual liberation are most commonly associated with a diagnosis of hysteria. This is because hysteria was defined as a mental instability with fits of rage and anxiety. Interestingly, these symptoms are all things that can occur when a person is suffering from an actual illness or trauma, and from this I come to the conclusion that a diagnosis of hysteria was created to control women that society deemed unstable.

Munch's artwork is incredibly interesting largely due to the life events that shaped the way he worked and the subjects he focused on. He had a troubling and traumatic childhood experience, which resulted in the psychological anguish that plagued him for the rest of his life. I would personally describe his art as quite disturbing and depressing due to the intense colours against the ominously shaped shadows and background features. His pieces are also semi-abstract creating a somewhat mysterious feel to the overall aesthetic of his portfolio of work. One observation I would also like to discuss however is that Munch was creating work at the same time women were being diagnosed with hysteria. This means that an interpretation of the context he worked in is that whilst Munch was being praised for creating work inspired by his mental illness, women were being sedated and hospitalized for doing the same. I think this is very telling of the society we live in where men are considered superior to women.



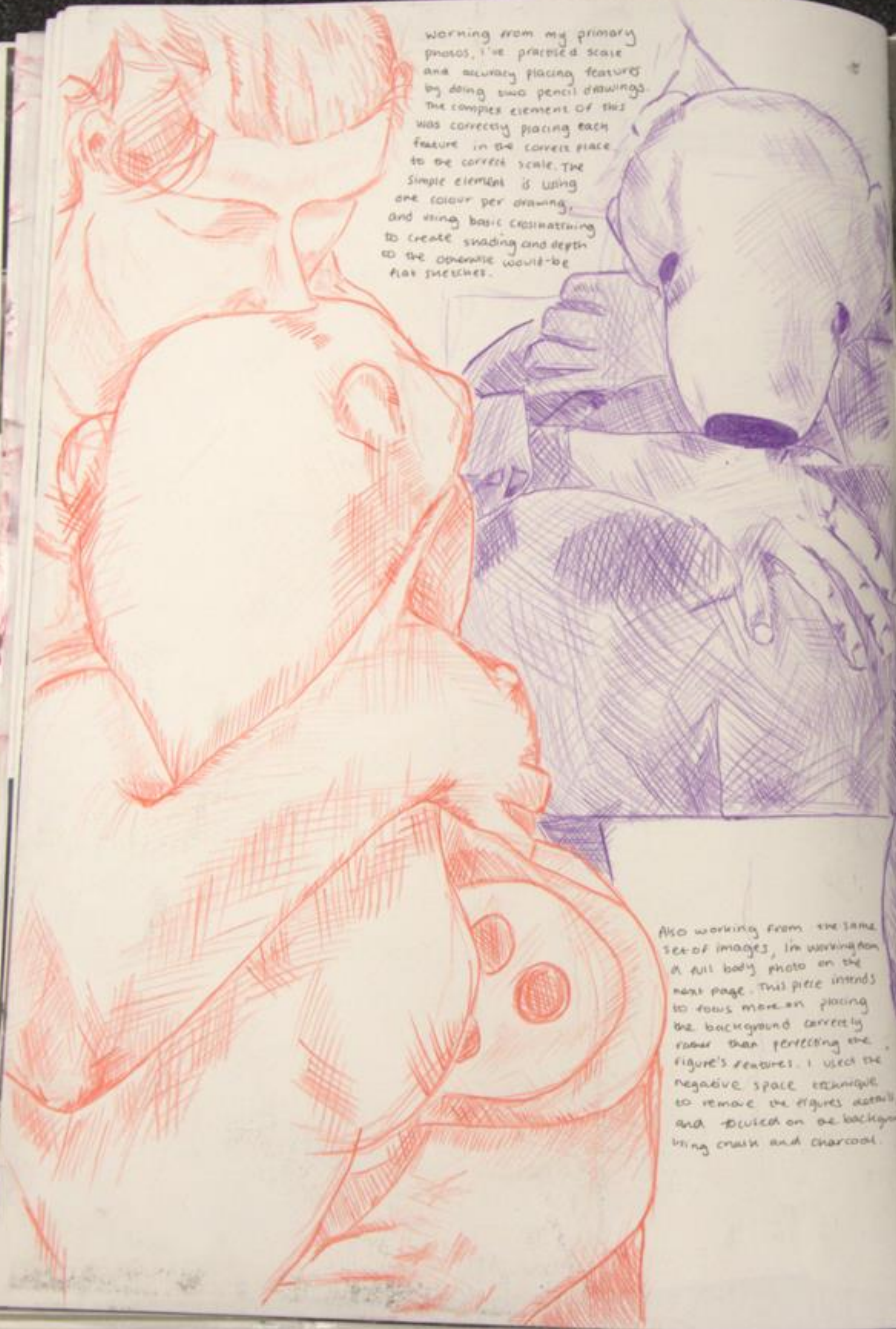
**The Sick Child (pictured to the right)**  
The sick child is one of Munch's earliest works. It depicts what I interpret to be a mother bowing her head in anguish over her sick child. This evokes themes of death, loss, anxiety and madness, and his exploitation of these themes so early on in his career sets the tone for his future works. This piece I have discovered is devoted to Munch's deceased sister, and this personal theme allows for an insight into the artist's traumatic past experiences.

**Puberty 1894-95 (pictured directly below)**  
This is another piece by Munch that explores agony, anxiety, and loss. The lone female figure appears frustrated and guarded, encased by her surroundings. I think the shadow behind her is of great interest, as the looming, ominous shape suggests a presence haunting her space or subconscious. The way the figure is proportioned is also slightly offputting so I did some research into it. I discovered this is probably because Munch painted her from his imagination meaning she is not exactly accurate.





working from my primary photos, I've practiced scale and accuracy placing features by doing two pencil drawings. The complex element of this was correctly placing each feature in the correct place to the correct scale. The simple element is using one colour per drawing, and using basic crosshatching to create shading and depth as the opposite would be flat sketches.



Also working from the same set of images, in preparation of a full body photo on the next page. This piece intends to focus more on placing the background correctly rather than perfecting the figure's features. I used the negative space technique to remove the figures detail, and devised on the background using cross and charcoal.







## composition

### ← idea 1

Composition 1 is a more simple approach to composition ideas as it almost directly references one of my primary images. It is largely inspired by Edvard Munch's approach to painting as it shows a sad looking figure in a domestic space. To make it more in the style of Munch, I've darkened the colour scheme significantly.

## composition idea 2 →

Composition 2 is more complex as it combines elements of Munch and Abanovicz's styles. The figure is hunched over in a dark area in the style of Munch. The circular shapes take inspiration from Magdalena Abanovicz's 'Embryology' paintings. The background is blacked out in a similar style to Gentileschi, making the figure appear more prominent on the canvas.



## composition

### ← idea 3

Composition idea 3 is similar to composition 2, but I'm using a photo from a different angle showing the teddy bear's face. The background is still blacked out in Gentileschi's style, but I've changed up the colours on the circular shapes. I used some reds and purples as those are the colours I used for my pencil drawings previously.

## evaluation

This painting was done for a six hour exam. It is done in oil paint on wooden board. In the end I decided to do the painting based more on composition 2, however I added less circles than originally planned so the piece didn't become overcrowded. I've painted the figure using green and yellow based colours, using purples for some shadows to convey an sense of sadness and unease. The background consisting of the swirls and seemingly empty space envelop the figure so they are being held in the space similar to how the person is holding the teddy bear. The contrast against the dark background also make the figure appear more prominent on the page. The brown in the teddy bear on the page. The brown in the teddy bear compliments the shades I used in the hair, and this helps to tie the piece together. Overall, I am happy with the outcome, and I think I have achieved the atmosphere and vibe I was hoping to create.





# NOTAN PAINTING

'simple'

Notan is a Japanese design concept involving the experimentation of the placement of light and dark elements as they are placed next to each other. I've tried this technique using one of my composition ideas, and I think the outcome was interesting. Only using two colours forces you to focus on the shapes and placement of colours, and this is useful for creating composition ideas as the process is quite quick.







Each example on this page relates to a theme of either feminine rage, or women healing from trauma. This provides a link back to Genie'sini at the beginning of my project.

**Sharp Objects +  
Gone Girl**  
- Gillian Flynn's books -

The book and HBO TV show 'Sharp Objects' is a telling of female trauma, and one aspect is that it explores a horrific relationship with a mother and daughter. Alongside themes of a surface level 'perfect' family, it explores female power, abuse, trauma, and pain.



'Gone Girl' is a psychological thriller following a broken marriage and a sociopathic woman who will stop at nothing to get revenge. After discovering her husband's affair she fakes her death and pins the murder on him almost as a punishment for his infidelity. This story has been labelled as many things, and some describe it as a story about female rage due to the main character's actions, however I think there are far more layers to the film than that.

**Examples from Popular Culture/Media**

**Pearl (2022)**  
Dir. Ti West

The 2022 film 'Pearl' is an incredible horror/slasher origin film following the psychologic breakdown of a woman - Pearl. I believe it to be a story of a woman pushed too far, who then decides to push back; it has been interestingly labelled a 'feminist horror' by some critics which is fascinating as the movie builds over 100 minutes to her breakdown, involving the murder of several characters who could be considered to be holding her back. It is overall a story of female rage, with the rising credit scene exploring a range of facial emotion (to the top right) including joy, sadness, rage and horror. The movie references technical colour films like 'The Wizard of Oz' for its colour palette with the predominant colour in the film being red.



**LUZENE HILL**

**Retracing the trace**  
- installation -

Simpler in its execution, complex in its themes.



This installation uses thick pieces of dyed thread and textile fibres to create a meaningful and hard-hitting piece of art.

Luzene Hill is a Native American multi-media artist, who combines performance with installation. Her work largely reflects on violence against women and she uses a form of abstraction to reflect on these difficult topics. This piece "retracing the trace" addresses the number of sexual assaults that go unreported, and renounces the traces of her own trauma. Violence against Native American women is almost three times greater than the US national average, and Hill's work expertly brings attention to this shocking fact. All of the details in the installation are intentional. I think the red colour of the thread is chosen to represent the countless lives lost to gender based violence. The artist using her body to create the outline is her reclaiming her trauma at the hands of an abuser overall. I love this installation due to its heavy message and incredible execution. It creates a very moving atmosphere. My response to Hill begins on the next page.





# Process of making the dress



←1 Step one of the process was to cut Of the pieces for the bodice shown is half of one layer, each layer is made up of five pieces, and there were three layers in total.



→3 Step three was to make the eyelet holes on the back of the bodice. I used a small plastic device and a hammer to punch the holes, and then places the metal eyelets, securing them again using the plastic device and a hammer.



Step two was to stitch the pieces together, and then take the 2 stiff middle layer and inner lining and align them.

After this I was able to attach them to the outer layer by stitching right sides together and then flipping it inside out. I then stitched the sleeves together inside.



**Finished Bodice** → To the right is the finished bodice. The finish wasn't perfect as there is some creasing on the outside layer, and I think this is due to the stiff layer I placed in the inside to save materials instead of boning the full structure. Despite this I am happy with the outcome as it is the correct shape and design. Overall the bodice took around 5 hours to complete.



←1 step one of the skirt was to cut the pieces, there were five in total for the skirt.



←2 step to align all of the seams, and sew them in place. As the pieces were very large (over a metre in length) and there were five seams, this took a while at approximately three and a half hours including pressing.

3 after sewing the five panels, I placed the front pieces and pinned them down. I then added bias binding around the all top hem and stitched it down.



After adding the binding to prevent it from fraying, I began the accordion pleat process. I stitched these individually by hand, and this was the longest part of the process.



←5 After placing and stitching the pleats, I added ribbon at the end of the two back openings so that the skirt could be secured onto a person easily.



76 I then placed it on a mannequin to check the length and adjust if necessary.



## Final product

To the left is the final skirt and bodice on a mannequin. I used a wired hip bustle to give the skirt volume on the sides, and I love how the pleats sat. In total the skirt took about 20 hours to complete due to the complex pleats, and the total time taken was 25 hours including the bodice.



# Photoshoot

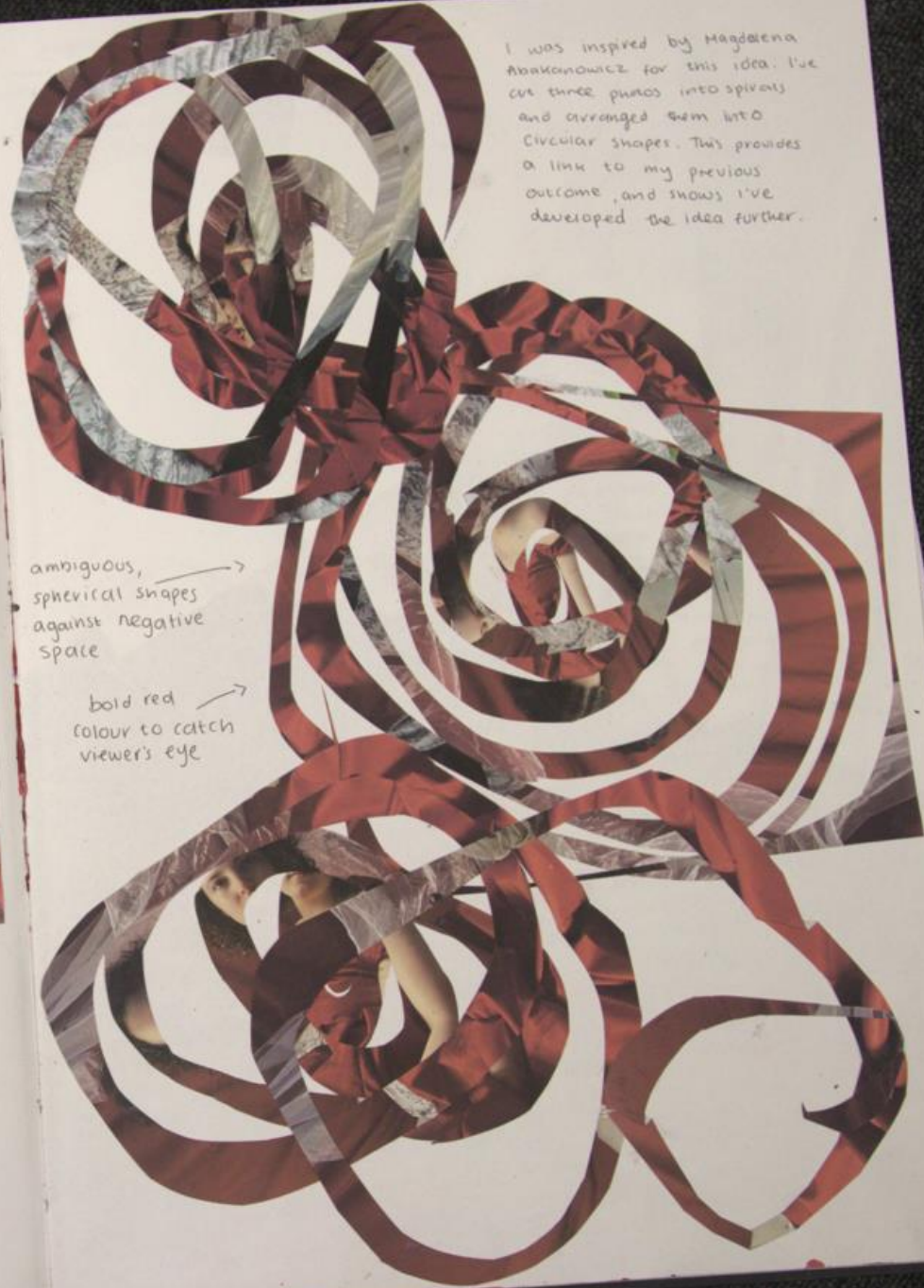
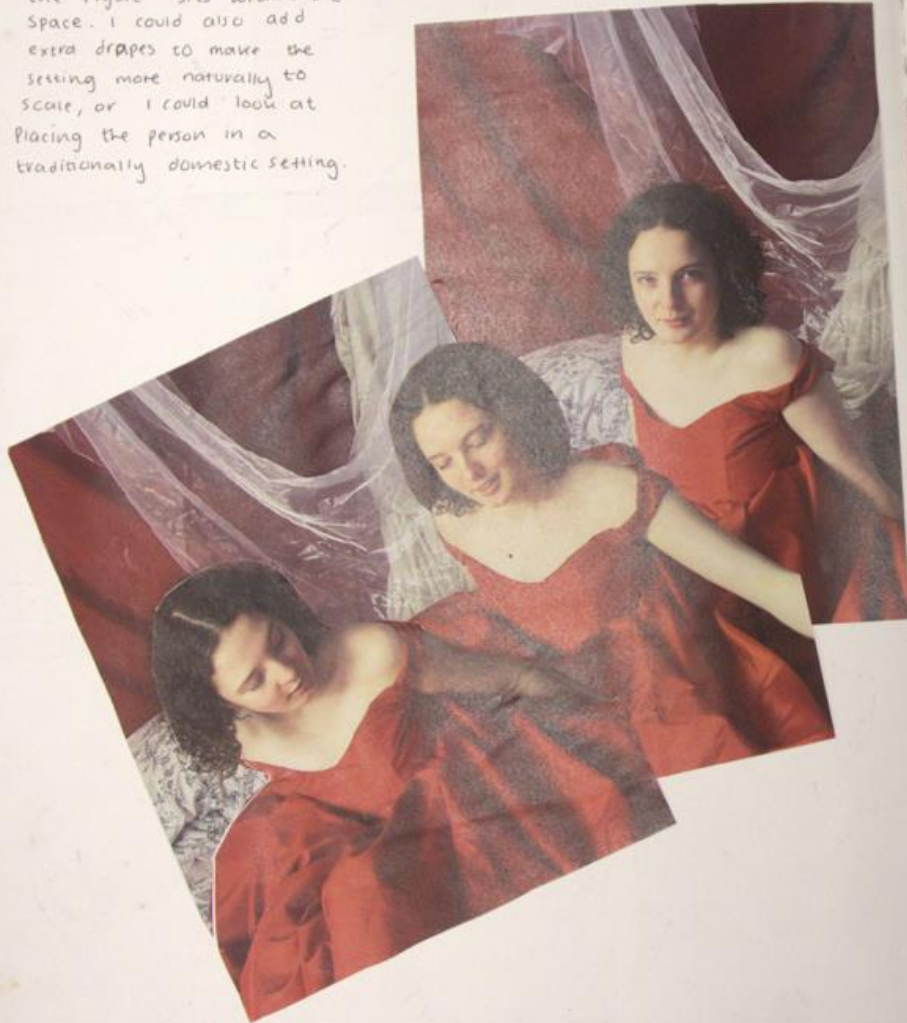
For this photoshoot, I dressed the model in the dress I made and I hung draped domestic bedroom setting to reference back to Munich. In the background, I hung draped fabric using some of the leftover dress fabric to use fabric on a large scale, a reference to Madonna's and Hill. The bedrooms have an ornate flower pattern to create a slightly regal feel, and the overall background choices and composition are largely inspired by Genieschi.





# Physical Photo Manipulation

In this instance, I was thinking about the prompt I worked from previously concerning 'represent complicated movement'. I chose three photos that appear to be a sequence, and cut and stuck them to appear to represent the figure sitting upwards. If I were to develop this for a composition idea, I would work out the best way to move the figure and change the scale of the background so that the figure sits within the space. I could also add extra drapes to make the setting more naturally to scale, or I could look at placing the person in a traditionally domestic setting.



I was inspired by Magdalena Abakanowicz for this idea. I've cut three photos into spirals and arranged them into circular shapes. This provides a link to my previous outcome, and shows I've developed the idea further.

ambiguous, spherical shapes against negative space

bold red colour to catch viewer's eye

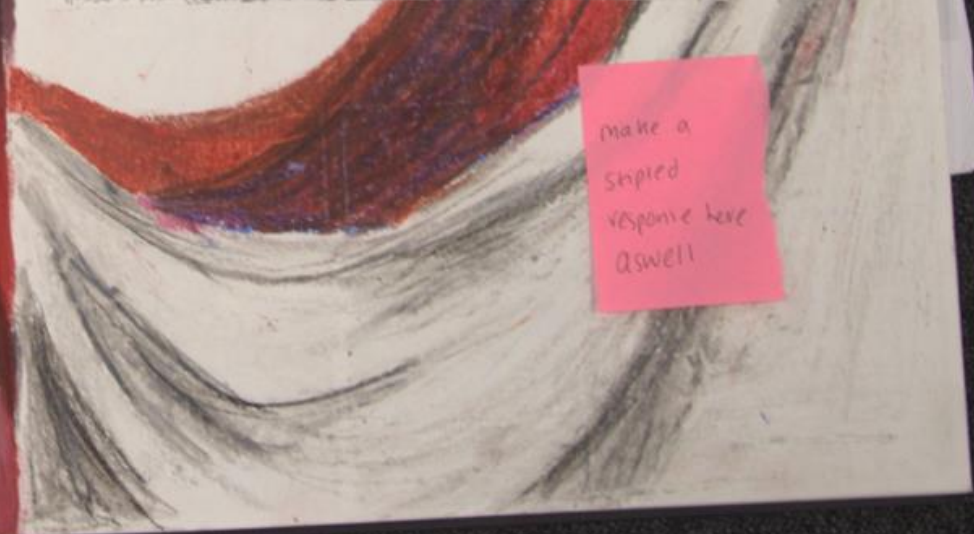
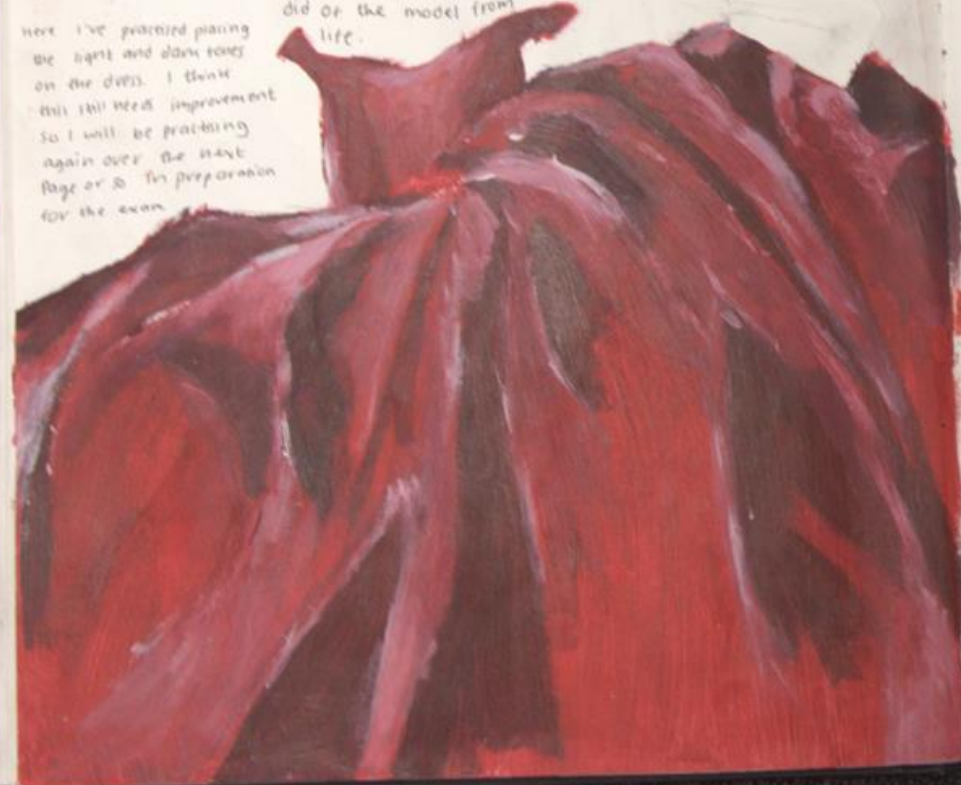




Here I've been practising face proportions and placement as this is something I sometimes struggle with. I kept it simple using pencil and placed the darker lines and mid tones.

The two that are stuck in are cut out from my personal sketchbook. They are first hand observational studies I did of the model from life.

Next I've practised placing the light and dark tones on the dress. I think this still needs improvement so I will be practising again over the next page or so in preparation for the exam.



make a striped response here as well





# ELISABETTA SIRANI

Elisabetta Sirani was an Italian Baroque painter and printmaker. She was one of the first women artists to work in early modern Bologna, who had established an academy for other women artists to study and refine their skills. Today, Sirani is considered a pioneer of feminism in art, despite her career only lasting a few years. Sirani's style can be compared to Artemisia Gentileschi, and this is because I've observed that they both dedicated themselves to depicting strong female figures. These include but are not limited to Judith, Cleopatra, Portia (Brutus' wife) and Timoclea, who throws her tormentor into a fountain (picture on the bottom left corner of the next page). I personally really love Sirani's work, it is really interesting from the composition to the subject matter. It becomes very clear when considering the subject matter why she has been labelled an early feminist artist; her depictions of strong, powerful women reclaiming their eras and lives say some of the basic ideas that form modern feminism.

## Portia bounding her thigh, 1664

This oil on canvas shows the heroic traits women faced in order to be taken seriously. Portia (sonnet was the wife of Brutus, and some scholars believe she may have been involved in the plot to kill Julius Caesar, or at least was the only woman to know about it before-hand). The scene depicted shows Portia proving her ability to withstand physical pain, to prove to her husband that she would not reveal the assassination plot under torture. It is a political painting portraying a heroine, and is rendered beautifully which tells us well about both Portia and Sirani's characters. It highlights their determination to survive in a world not created for them, and highlights their respective intelligence. This painting is also beautifully and effectively composed, positioning Portia in the foreground corner looking back towards the other figures behind her.



This flap is up —  
here is my response to Sarah 14's a composition idea inspired by the piece 'Portia bounding her thigh'. The background uses lots of straight lines with the door frame showing other figures, and I've attempted to reflect this here.





# Composition Ideas

15 hour  
final exam



The abstracted background references Munch and Ström's work due to the combination of dark colours and abstraction using straight lines. A lot of Munch's works also have abstracted backgrounds, but they are more spherical.

I like that the image is bottom heavy, which leads the eyes to the side and allows the viewer to work their way from bottom to top.

It could be interesting to use colour pencil to draw the figure on the large canvas.

linking back to 'female rage and hysteria' through the colour choice of 'red' representing violence against women.

The figure would be forward facing and staring at the viewer.

eye contact holds viewer's focus, allowing them to absorb the meaning of the painting.

Composition with a woman looking the centre of importance with back to Geraschki an angry female partner.

Simple in the sense that it is a single figure but hasn't been edited or altered.

Complex in the sense that the background conveys a multitude of ideas by a multitude of artists.

The fact that I made the garment in the painting adds to the complexity and shows I can use a variety of mediums.

# ideas

Each figure placed at different heights to fill the space more effectively.

Both these ideas feel more 'simple' as they are straight the primary poses with little changes made to them.

This references the idea of working from the front of 'represent complicated movement'.

I used pictures to arrange both compositions on one page.

I don't like this idea as much as there isn't any sense of movement it feels stagnant.

I would paint this scene in oil paints on canvas.

A focus on preparation and detail.



This piece feels like the model is in motion rather than still like the idea above.

Both composition ideas on this page use the rule of odds to keep the eye moving about the piece.

These are based on my first hand primary photos and subsequent observational studies.

This idea (combine)   
 elements from the   
 previous page

Facial features very   
 expressive and   
 organic forms

I could paint from   
 this on a large   
 scale and find   
 meaning in the shapes   
 and forms rather   
 than the details, as   
 when articulated by the   
 chaotic background

Single - shapes are   
 more

Complex - a complex   
 shape (with faces)   
 appearing within the   
 form as a hand.

This could   
 be interesting   
 however I don't   
 think it fits in with   
 'chaotic' style and perhaps 'very   
 not like the previous ideas

It also has the   
 possibility of being   
 more significant and   
 more subtle

I do however really like the   
 background idea that I started   
 forward from the previous page,   
 and will likely use it as the final original

# Developing my ideas



I really like this   
 particular reference   
 photo that I used   
 last, and it will   
 probably be a part   
 of my final   
 composition   
 idea

While I like this composition   
 it doesn't contain the   
 visual still power I'd   
 like it in 'complex' and   
 therefore will   
 not be used   
 (perhaps as well)

I am going to   
 develop this   
 the final design   
 idea on the   
 next page

For the sketch I could   
 do a more flowing or   
 softer and give it with   
 a large central 'form'   
 that will be background   
 over the top so it will   
 look like it has   
 within the composition

This idea is the   
 most like the   
 one I want to   
 use for the   
 final design   
 (perhaps)

Dark is significant   
 (dark) a more   
 dramatic than   
 from the complex   
 pattern as the form   
 and the dark

Using my   
 first idea and   
 developing   
 it further

part of the   
 face is   
 obscured   
 (perhaps)





# Final Composition for the 15 hour exam

For  
size  
etc

I don't  
like  
these  
medium  
dark  
brown  
blue  
black

Complex  
style  
abstract  
organic  
this can  
be used  
for  
blue  
yellow  
red



Colours  
in the  
background



Colours  
in the  
dress



Colours in  
the skin  
and hair

I chose to go with a similar composition as one of my first ideas

I'm going to do it in far more detail than my original idea, and its use acrylic or oil paint layered together faster than colour pencils and acrylic.

The previous pages helped me decide on colour placement for the background.

One prominent figure in the foreground acting as the focal point

A woman being the main focal point links back to 'female rage and hysteria', our combined with the renaissance inspired gowns. All of this links to Stuart and Obelisk.

A large idea of the 8/10 highlight women's oppression, linking to Luene Hill.

The background references the abstract style by Edward Munch, with sharper lines referencing Elizabeth Simard backgrounds.

The composition is simple in the sense that it is one figure, yet complex because of the 25 hour spent making the dress as a development from Luene Hill, and the improvised abstract background.



Start of Pearl's story  
End of Reproductive Freedom



### Simple or Complex, Final evaluation

The given theme for the exam paper, 'Simple or Complex', can be interpreted in many ways. As soon as I discovered the theme I knew I wanted to study the complex social and political issue of gender based violence against women. To do this, I studied artists such as Andrea Brontë who's work depicts a woman being used as a medical subject in a clinical lesson about 'female hysteria', an old medical diagnosis used to control women who society deemed 'insane'. I also studied early feminist artists such as Artemisia Gentileschi and Elisabetta Sirani alongside contemporary feminists including Lizzy Hill. The early artists focus the idea of 'female rage' which is defined as a response to things gone wrong in the world. I linked these themes and ideas to examples seen in modern pop culture including Gillian Flynn's 'Sharp Objects' and the A24 movie 'Pearl' directed by Ti West. Pearl is an especially interesting movie as she murders multiple characters under the excuse that they were holding her back from her full potential. By the end of the film, many viewers have said that they felt sympathy for Pearl despite her violent behaviour, and the film has been labelled a story of female rage by many critics. The iconic red dress shown in 'Pearl' combined with the female based installation by Lizzy Hill inspired me to make a red dress referencing fashions from the renaissance period when Gentileschi worked. This idea ties in all of the varying themes that I explored in the project, and I used an image from the photoshoot with the dress as the reference for my final composition.

My final composition uses one of the images from my photoshoot as the reference. It is an image I took from below so that the skirt sits in the foreground and the figure starts to fall back into the background. I like the perspective of the image, and it almost appears foreshortened due to the skirt appearing so much larger than the person wearing it which helps to create the illusion of space and depth. For the background, I chose to reference the abstract style of Edward Munch combined with some sharper lines to reference the structured backgrounds utilised by Elisabetta Sirani. The idea is for the figure to look like she is sat within the abstraction to reference the way in which Munch paints his backgrounds as looking shadows that envelop the figure(s) in his works.

### Day one of the exam

Prior to the 15 hour exam period, I prepped my canvas with a colour wash using a water down mix of burnt sienna and burnt umber. The warm tone provided a perfect base for my predominantly red and purple colour palette that I intended for the rest of the piece. In the first half an hour, I took time to sketch out my composition ensuring the proportions and sizes were accurate. I first started with the dress, placing the darkest shades for the shadows and folds in the skirt. I then put a thin layer of cadmium red over the whole skirt allowing the shadows to show through, and this provided my base to work on top of. I then went in with a dark blue colour over the very darkest points on the skirt and placed the creases in the bodice. After this I was able to start layering bright reds and oranges together to create the lightest parts of the fabric, and the contrasting blues and oranges worked really effectively in creating a sense of depth and movement in the fabric. Towards the end of day one, I began placing the first layers of colour in the face and neck which provided a base for me to begin working into on day two. I think the most successful thing I did on day one was the painting of the skirt. I was really happy with how the colours were working together at that time and I was able to go back and develop it further over the next two days.







#### Day two of the exam

On day two, I began by working into the face. I started this day by working on the skin tones. I painted the side of the face that was shadowed using dark purples and red, and the light side with predominantly pinks and peach tones. I used the darkest shades on the lighter side as highlights for the shadowed side in the hopes that the colours would tie together, and I think this worked quite well. I used a similar technique on the arm, and I made the arm's shadow a dark red so that there was some differentiation with the blue creases on the dress. I then began placing the hair, using the darkest shade as a base and working into it with beige and blue for the details. In the final hour of this day I began to add in the abstract background which I intended to be a combination of the colours I used for the skin tones. As stated on my planning page the abstractness is in reference to artist Edvard Munch, and the straight lines are in reference to Elisabetta Sirani.

#### Day three of the exam

On the final day, I started by finishing the skirt and bodice. I layered some more orange shades in the highlighted areas and went in with thicker layers of red ensuring the leave evident brush strokes in some places to achieve a three dimensional effect on the skirt. I then highlighted some areas with thin lines of white to add even more dimension. While the painting was still unfinished I wanted to take some interesting photos of it to include as a kind of performance piece. I created a stylised set up using a black background and set the canvas and easel in front of it. I then got the same model from the photo to wear the red dress again, and took pictures of her appearing to be in the process of painting herself. This idea is meant to represent her bringing attention to women's issues by using herself as the subject because as a woman she becomes a victim of patriarchy purely due to the fact that she identifies as a woman. The idea to do this is inspired by Gentileschi and Sirani, both of which often painted themselves in their famous works of art. After this I added the final touches to the painting. I placed mustard tones as highlights to offset the purple and red as I felt they were a little too overpowering, and placed titanium white in small amounts on the brightest points. Overall, I'm really happy with the outcome and it ended up the way I planned.

#### The images I took during the exam



















