



Pearson

# GCE A Level Advanced Art and Design

**Fine Art  
Component 1  
Walter**

**Total Mark 69 (56+PS13)**

	<b>A01 Develop</b>	<b>A02 Explore and Select</b>	<b>A03 Record</b>	<b>A04 Realise</b>	<b>Personal Study</b>
<b>Mark</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Performance Level</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
				<b>Total out of 90</b>	<b>69</b>

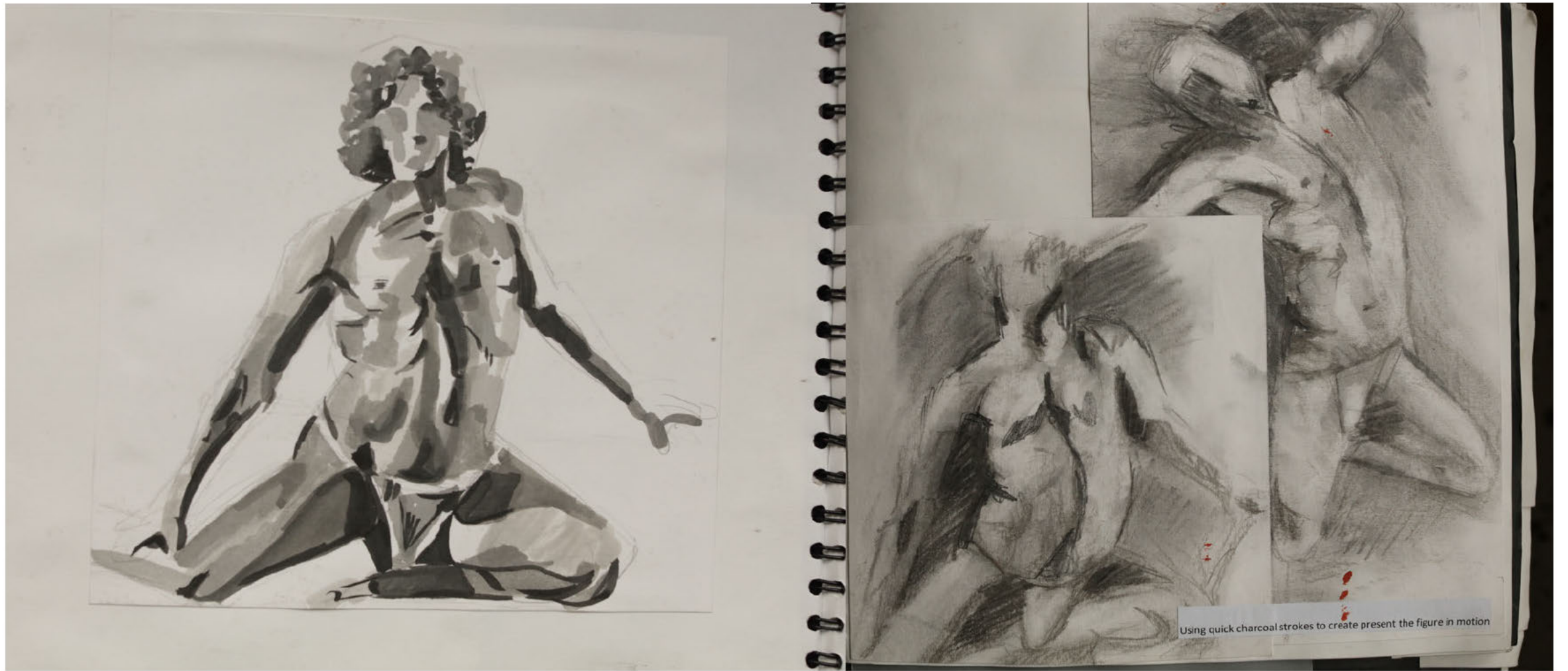


### Statement of Intent February

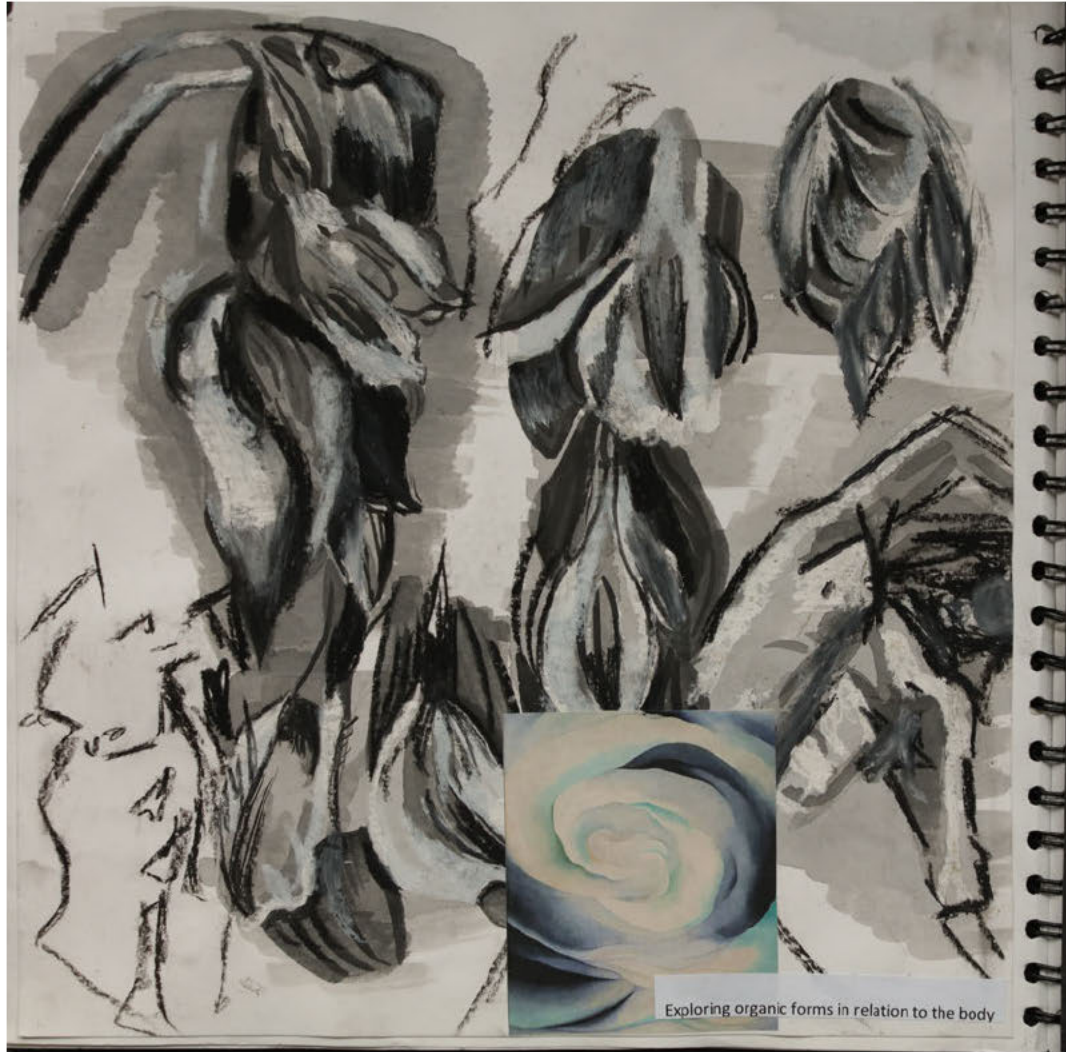
I intend to respond to the theme of the human form in environment and would like to explore the human body through abstract and figurative styles. I have been inspired by Lucien Freud and Francis Bacon's use of an impasto technique to depict the texture of flesh, often representing the human form as a piece of textured flesh or meat. In Freud's 'Benefits supervisor resting.' is a study of abundant, mottled female flesh that is described in extreme detail through Freud's use of impasto paint strokes. I would like to respond to this depiction of the female form and, inspired by Louise Bourgeois, interrogate the role of the viewer in art. In Bourgeois' work Cell XXVI the female form is evoked through organic forms created using textiles; the imagery of a cage and a mirror symbolize enclosure and self-reflection. I intend to respond to this piece through my installation by using textiles to evoke the form and texture of the human body.

I would like to explore the relationship between natural forms and the human figure in response to Paula Rego's depiction of women as animals and Bacon's response to the human form in relation to animals and meat. In Dog woman 1994 Rego responds to the silencing of woman using imagery of a screaming, animalistic woman 'unable to escape the confines of her frame.' I will explore the effect of color in depicting the depth of a person's character in response to Alice Neel's 'portrait of a Marxist girl'

I will create responses from life drawing classes to develop my ability to depict the human body in contorted and dynamic poses. Furthermore, I will draw inspiration from 3D mediums such as sculpture and installation to present the human form and texture through abstract mediums. In the later stages of my project, I want to explore symbolism of clothing, objects, and natural forms to evoke themes like isolation and sexualization. I intend to use paint to respond to the human form and will develop my use of color and composition through inspiration from Euan Uglow. I intend to use an impasto technique to fully depict the texture of the human form. I would like to explore abstracted depictions of the human body in response to Tracey Emin's charcoal drawings of the female form; I will also find inspiration from the autobiographical, personal nature of Emin's work.

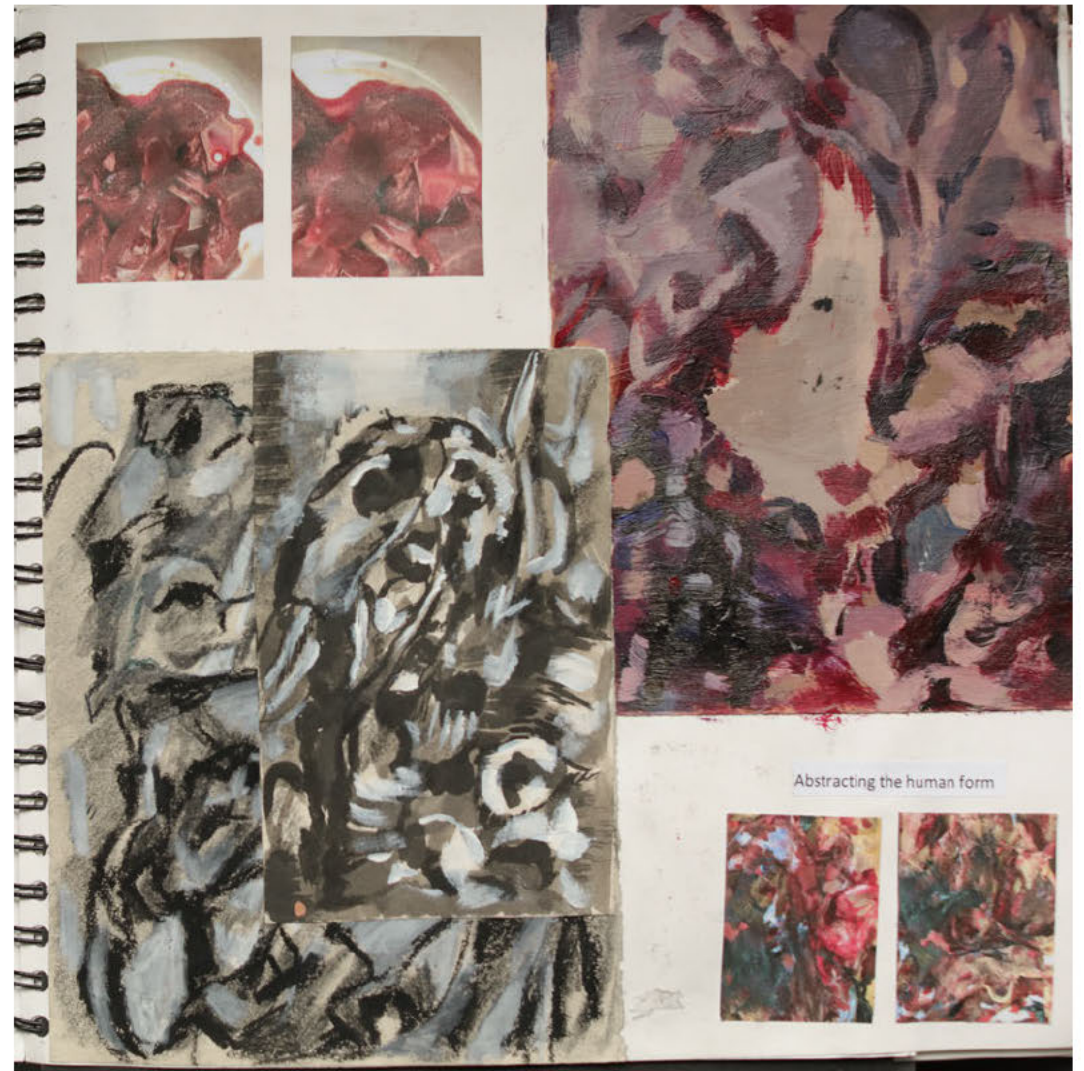
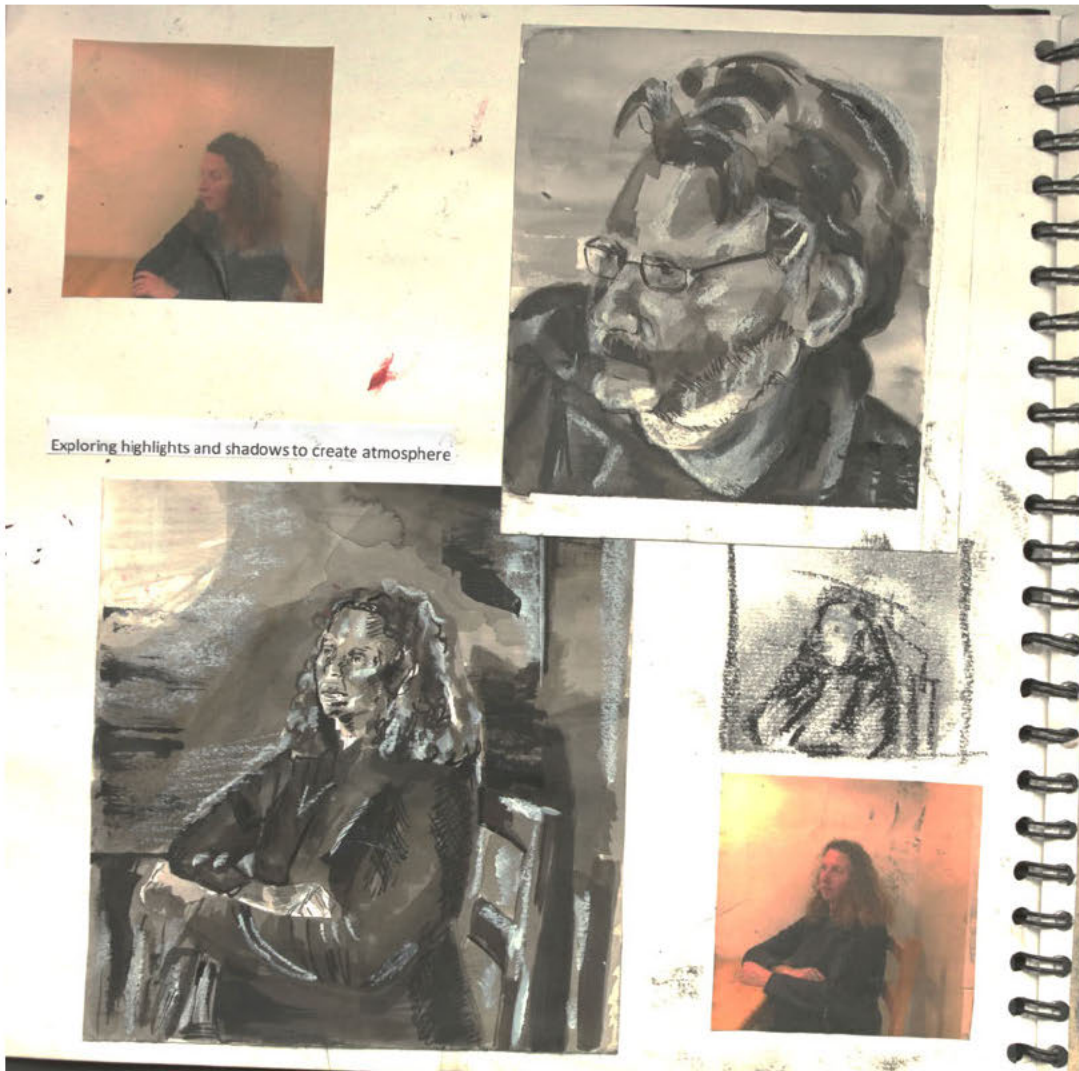








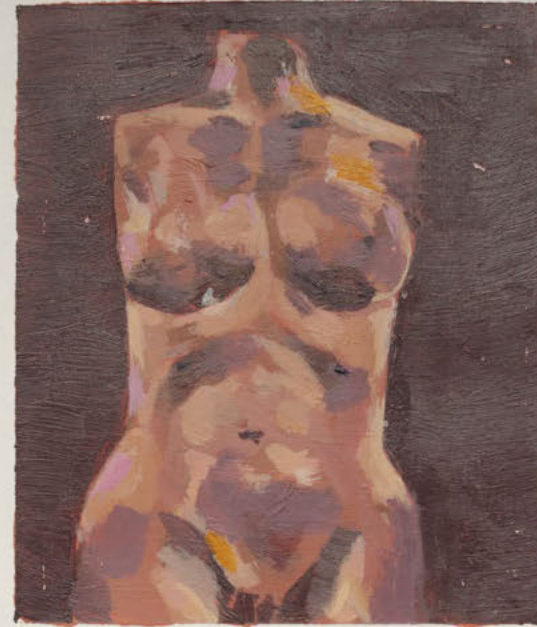




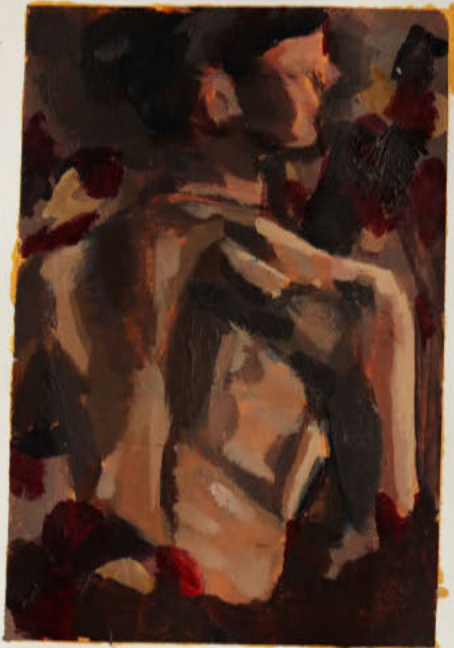




Installation- I was inspired by Francis Bacon and Louise Bourgeois to abstract the human figure into imagery of meat. I used melted wax and plastic to create organic forms that I then draped across paper structures. I then used painted and ripped tights to stretch across these structures to create interesting forms.



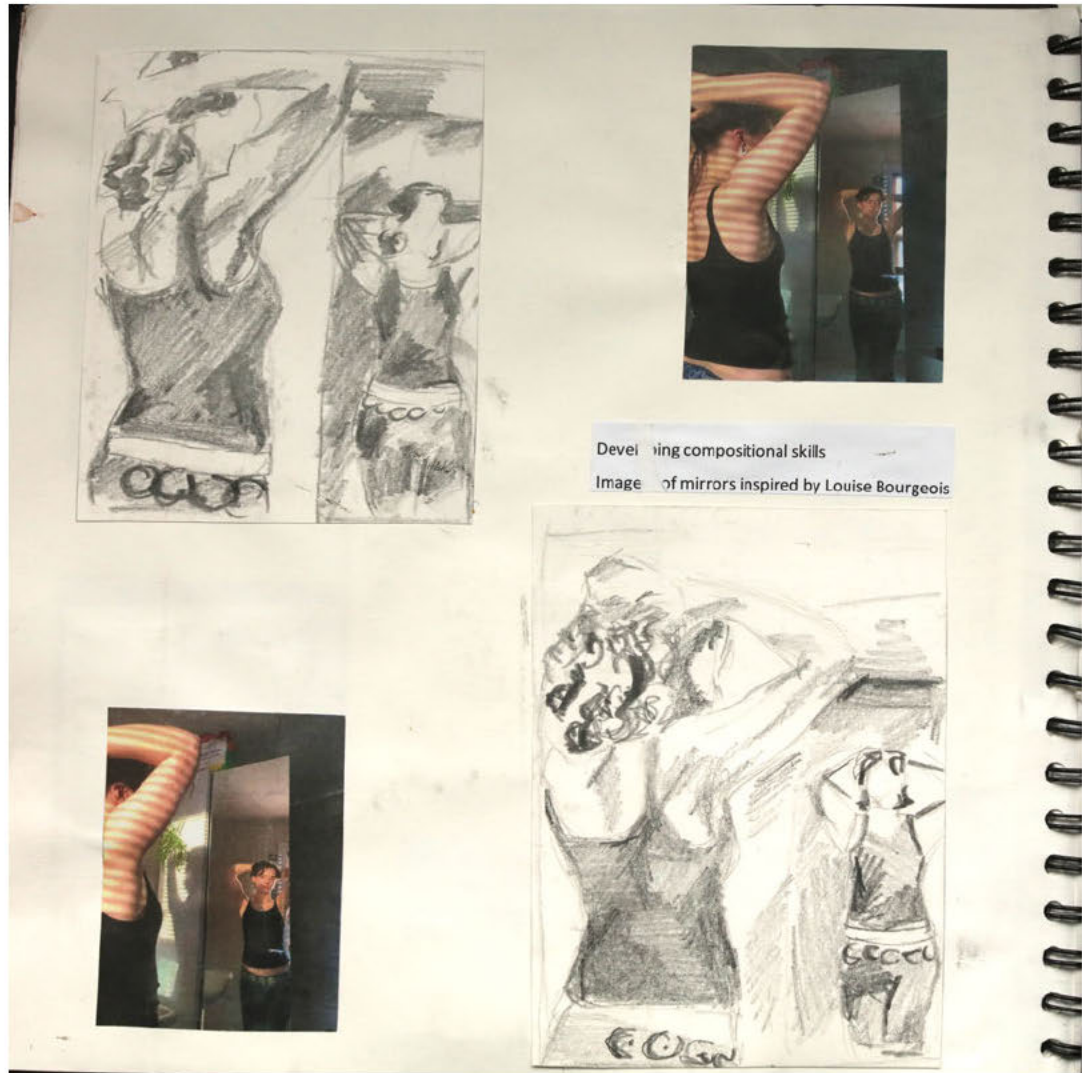
Exploring color and composition



I want to explore how the figure can be abstracted through imagery of organic forms. I was inspired to represent the body as meat by Francis Bacon.







Developing compositional skills  
Image of mirrors inspired by Louise Bourgeois

**Photography**

I conducted a Photoshoot using dynamic lighting and interesting poses to develop my understanding of the human form. Inspired by Louis Bourgeois, I used imagery of mirrors to convey self-reflection, and to reveal parts of the human psyche.

**Technical skills**

I used quick compositional sketches to develop my photographs' composition, paying attention to using a diagonal composition.

In my paintings I used impasto paint strokes to partially obscure the face.

I am pleased with my use of color in my paintings, and my use of abstract paint strokes to convey a reflection. However, to improve my paintings I could use a more nuanced palette, using both cool and warm shades to balance the coloration of my work.

**Artist influence**

- Picasso
- Beth McKenzie





Intentions

Artist Inspiration



Practical development

- Experimenting with using a warm underpainting to create bright flesh tones.
- Impasto painting
- Using canvas in preparation for larger paintings
- Working on composition- rule of thirds

Conceptual development

- Portraying women without objectification- inspired by Paula Rego
- Imagery of mirrors- reflecting on body image, self-reflection etc.

Areas of improvement

- My canvases are too small- to improve I will work on a bigger scale
- Colors are too warm- to improve I will place cool colors on a warm underpainting.

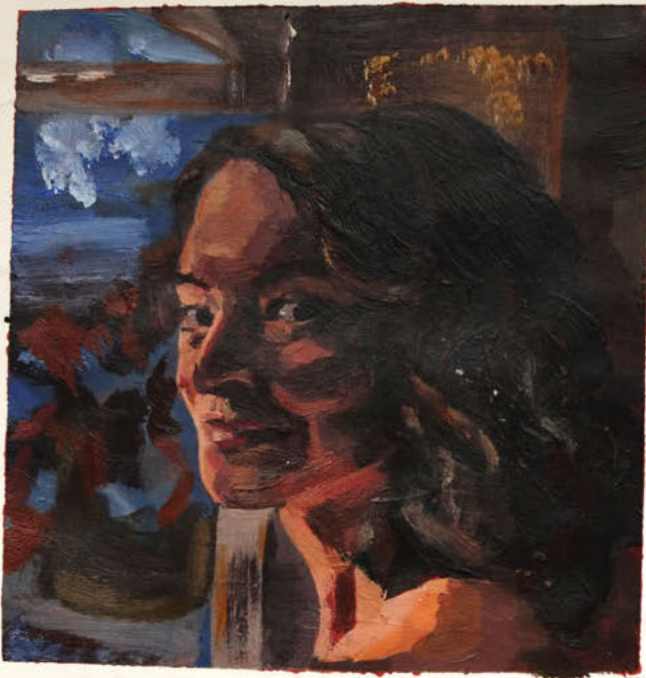


Louise Bourgeois

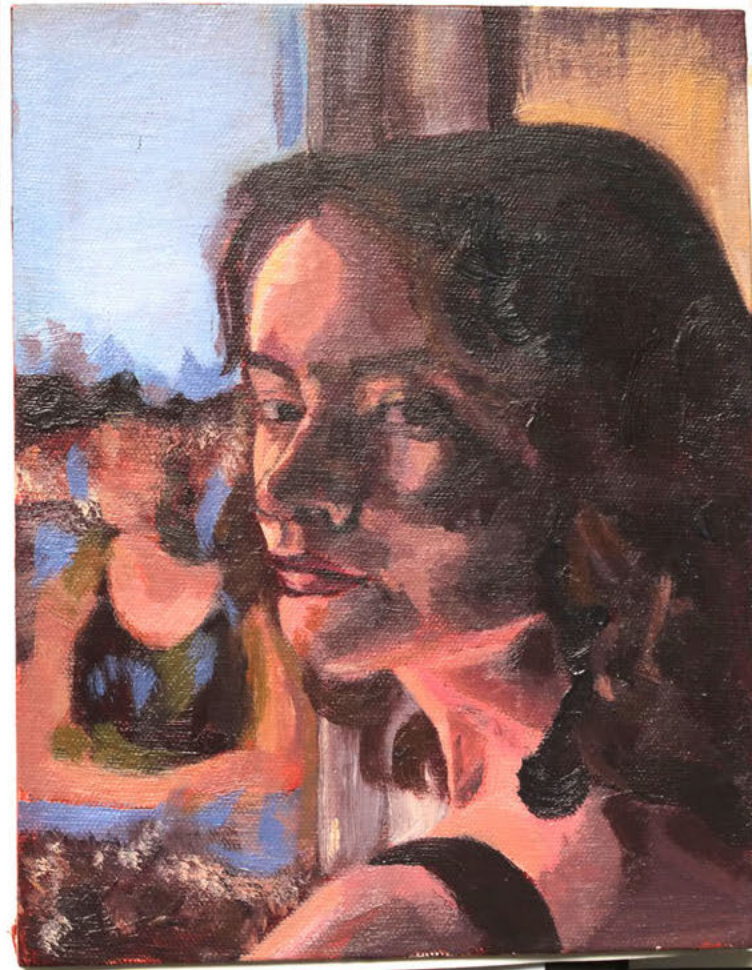


Bourgeois places the figure in the center of the composition which creates a sense of isolation; this is reflected in the imagery of a cell which creates a feeling of enclosure. This may be Bourgeois responding to the isolation in women's domestic life. The imagery of a mirror may represent vanity or self-reflection. This is echoed in Bourgeois' use of rounded, organic forms which may be used to criticize expectations placed on women's bodies. Furthermore, Bourgeois' use of textiles to create social commentary subverts expectations of a typically female medium.





Using a bright under painting to balance the cool tones in the painting.  
Refined painting- exploring the effect of bright colors.







Paula Rego (1935-2022)



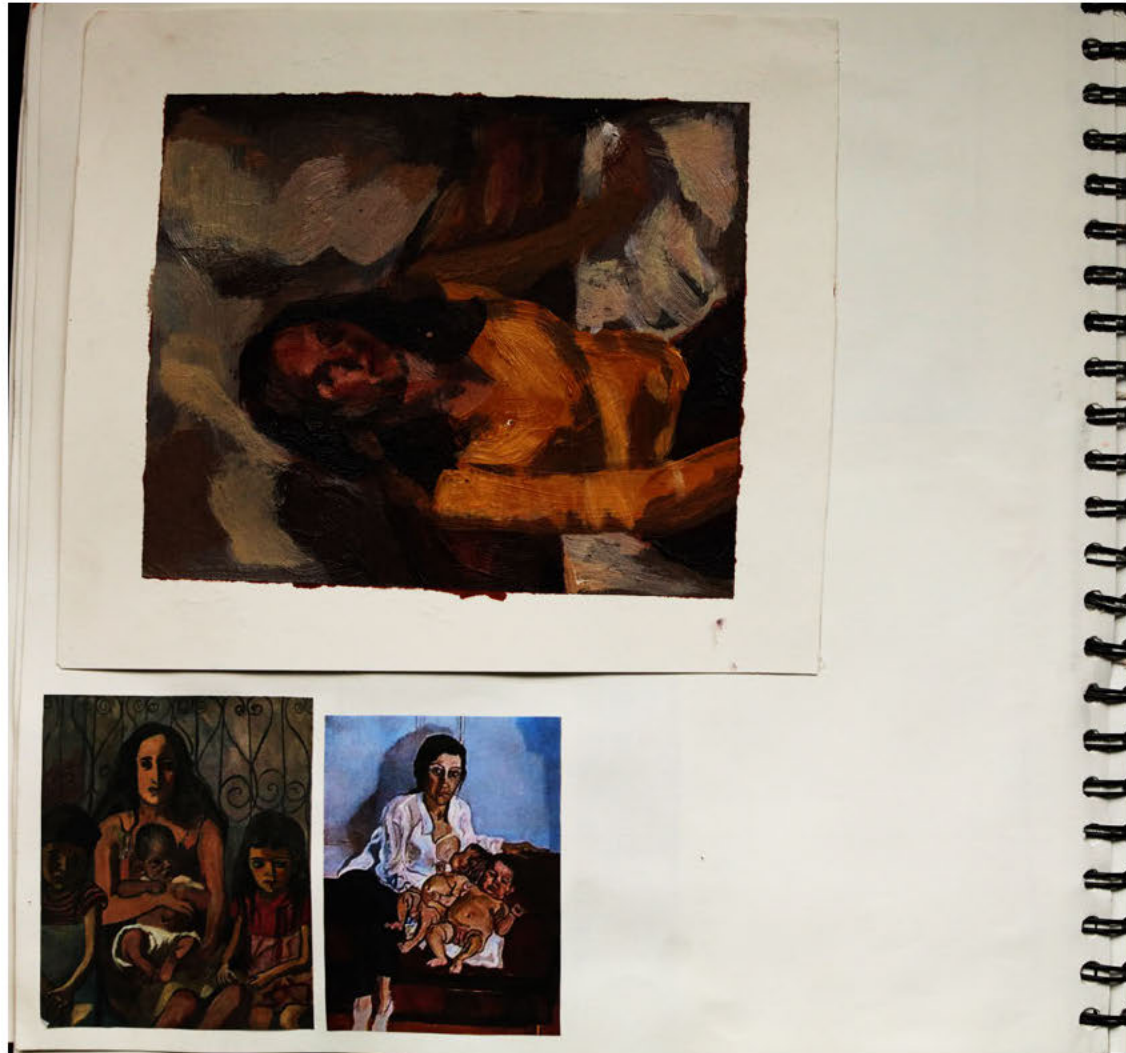
Paula Rego was a Portuguese British artist who was associated with the London group and the return to figurative art. Rego was inspired by Portuguese folklore and her work contains imagery of mythology and storybooks. Rego's work reflected her feminist beliefs; her abortion series has been credited as swaying public opinion over the Portuguese abortion vote.

Dog woman - formal analysis




In 'Dog Woman' Paula Rego positions a screaming woman in the center of the composition; the small frame of the piece creates a sense of isolation. The flesh-colored background makes the figure seem overbearing, and the woman's silent scream responds to the silencing of women during the Portuguese abortion vote that Rego is responding to. Rego's use of earth-toned colors connotes animalistic instinct, which is reflected in the title of the piece.





Photography

Artist Inspiration




Developing composition

- Using a diagonal composition inspired by Alice Neel
- Creating a sense of isolation

Concepts

- Presenting the figure without objectification inspired by Alice Neel and Paula Rego
- Using color to symbolize defiance.

Analysis:



- Subverting the relationship between artist and muse
- Cool tones, light paint strokes



Alice Neel

(January 28, 1900- October 13, 1984)

Alice Neel's figurative approach captures the outlandish and unique aspects of the characters she depicts. Her most famous work celebrates the characters of New York, often those who are not typically found in artwork. Neel's work depicts the unflattering aspects of her subject matter to capture the full intensity of the individual, often using confronting imagery to depict the nuances and inconsistencies in her sitters.

Neel's painting of Andy Warhol strips away his public image by depicting his body as frail and wounded. Even though he regarded nudity as 'a threat to my existence' Neel captures his torso in full, with its large scar and caving chest. Warhol's eyes are closed, indicating his discomfort, or disconnect from his body.



In Neel's portrait of 'Alice Breastfeeding' she captures the unflattering aspects of motherhood by depicting the subject as tired and frail. However, her confident facial expression conveys a sense of defiance, and her pose defies the male gaze. The cool blue tones of the background create a sense of melancholy which is contrasted by the bold red of the bottom of the piece. The mother figure is central to the piece, perhaps to defy the expectations of motherhood. The frame seems small, in contrast to the figures which creates isolation or being trapped.



Frank Auerbach

Born 1931

Frank Auerbach is considered alongside those in the London school of Art due to his figurative approach to depicting the human psyche. Frank Auerbach uses thick, impasto paint strokes to create abstract portraits and melancholic landscapes that capture a sense of cultural weariness. His impasto technique lends his work a sculptural approach, allowing him to depict depth and pure color. The abstract nature of his portraits creates a sense of chaos and captures a psychological impact.



Inspired by Frank Auerbach, I wanted to develop my use of texture using an impasto technique. I would like to refine my color palate using contrasting colors and a yellow under painting.



'Likeness is a very complicated business indeed...If something looks like a painting it does not look like an experience; if something looks like a portrait it does not really look like a person.'

Inspired by Frank Auerbach, I wanted to develop my use of texture using an impasto technique. I would like to refine my color palate using contrasting colors and a yellow under painting.





Walter Sickert  
(1860-1942)

In the piece 'dancer in a green dress' Sickert depicts a lone figure in motion. Sickert uses complimentary colors to create a sense of balance within the piece. The blue background tones evoke a sense of melancholy, which is contrasted by the deep red tone at the bottom of the piece. Sickert's loose brushwork conveys a sense of psychological chaos, which is intensified by the unnatural pose of the figure.



Inspired by Walter Sickert, I would like to develop my understanding of light and tone; I will use contrasting colors to create highlights and shadows. I would like to develop my understanding of cool tones to achieve a sense of balance within my work. I am inspired by the poses of Sickert's models as they help to convey a sense of voyeurism.

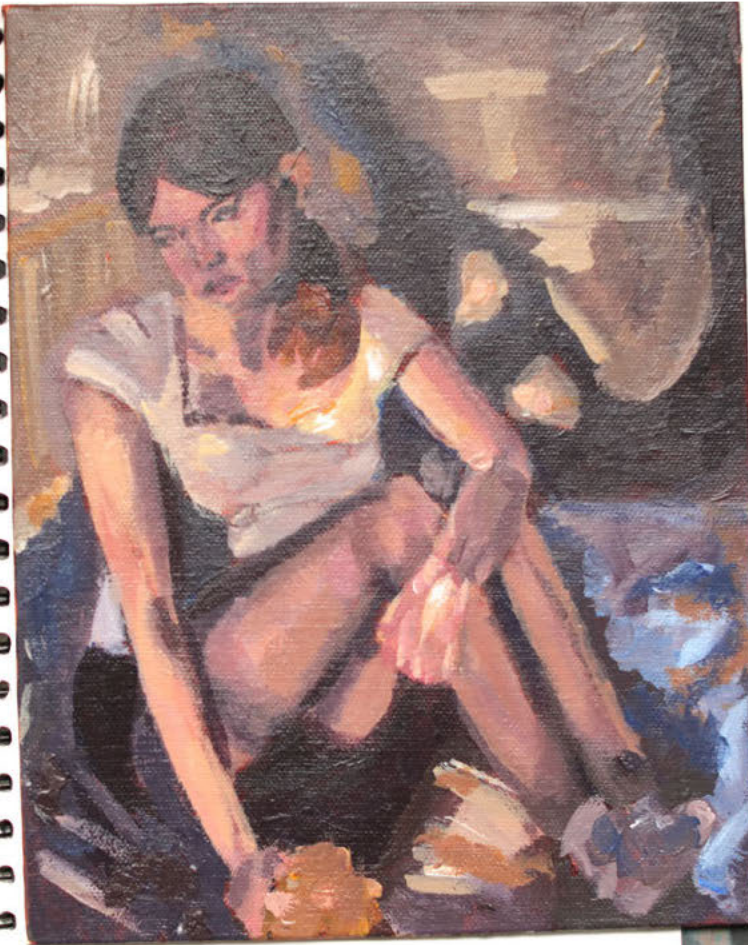
#### Intensions for end of component 1

- Creating a sense of isolation through a trapped composition
- Using color to create atmosphere
- Using shadows to create a sense of fear
- Creating interesting textures of paint

I used a canvas to challenge myself to work on a larger scale and develop a figurative approach to painting. I am pleased with the color and texture of my painting as the impasto approach conveys a sense of depth. However, I would like to develop my understanding of proportion and the human form using observational and compositional sketches.

I will also develop my use of cool toned colors to achieve a more balanced piece. I would like to apply these tones as blocks of color to create an abstract background.

I think this piece's diagonal composition is effective and the large scale of the figure, in contrast to the small frame, helps achieve a sense of isolation. However, I need to develop my understanding of the human form through compositional sketches as my proportions are not accurate. I used a warm toned pallet and a blue background to convey a sense of melancholy. In my next piece I will use more cool toned colors to prevent the figure from drawing into the background. To develop this piece, I will work on a larger scale, so I can more accurately express the proportions of the figure. I will also use clean blocks of color to avoid corrupting the colors that I am using.









### Mock Exam Preparation

Inspired by Alice Neel's portrait of a Marxist girl, I took photographs of my mum, trying to convey various emotions. I took these photographs on a bed to evoke a feeling of closeness.

I used a cool background, emphasized by cool lighting which contrasts with the bright yellow, evoking 'A portrait of a Marxist girl.'

### Artist Influence

- Max Beckman
- Alice Neel



Inspired by Alice Neel's portrait 'Marxist girl,' I would like to juxtapose yellow and blue tones to evoke a sense of resistance. I would like to use a blue toned background, and shadows to evoke a sense of fear, inspired by Neel's portrait 'Alice, breastfeeding.' I am also inspired by Neel's depiction of motherhood and would like to use my mum in my end piece for component 1.

I would like to use a diagonal composition to create balance within the piece, which will be strengthened by the contrasting blue and yellow tones.



I was inspired by Paula Rego's dancing ostriches to present women as powerful and without sexualization. I used a masculine pose and central composition to convey this idea,





69 marks, 9FA0, C1

#### Artist Inspiration for Component 2

- Guilla Guidobaldi
- Sylvia Sleigh
- Robert Rauschenberg
- Tracey Emin



## The Portrayal of Desire

### Artists

- Paula Rego
- Cindy Sherman
- Sylvia Sleigh

I intend to subvert the male gaze by presenting beauty through a female perspective.

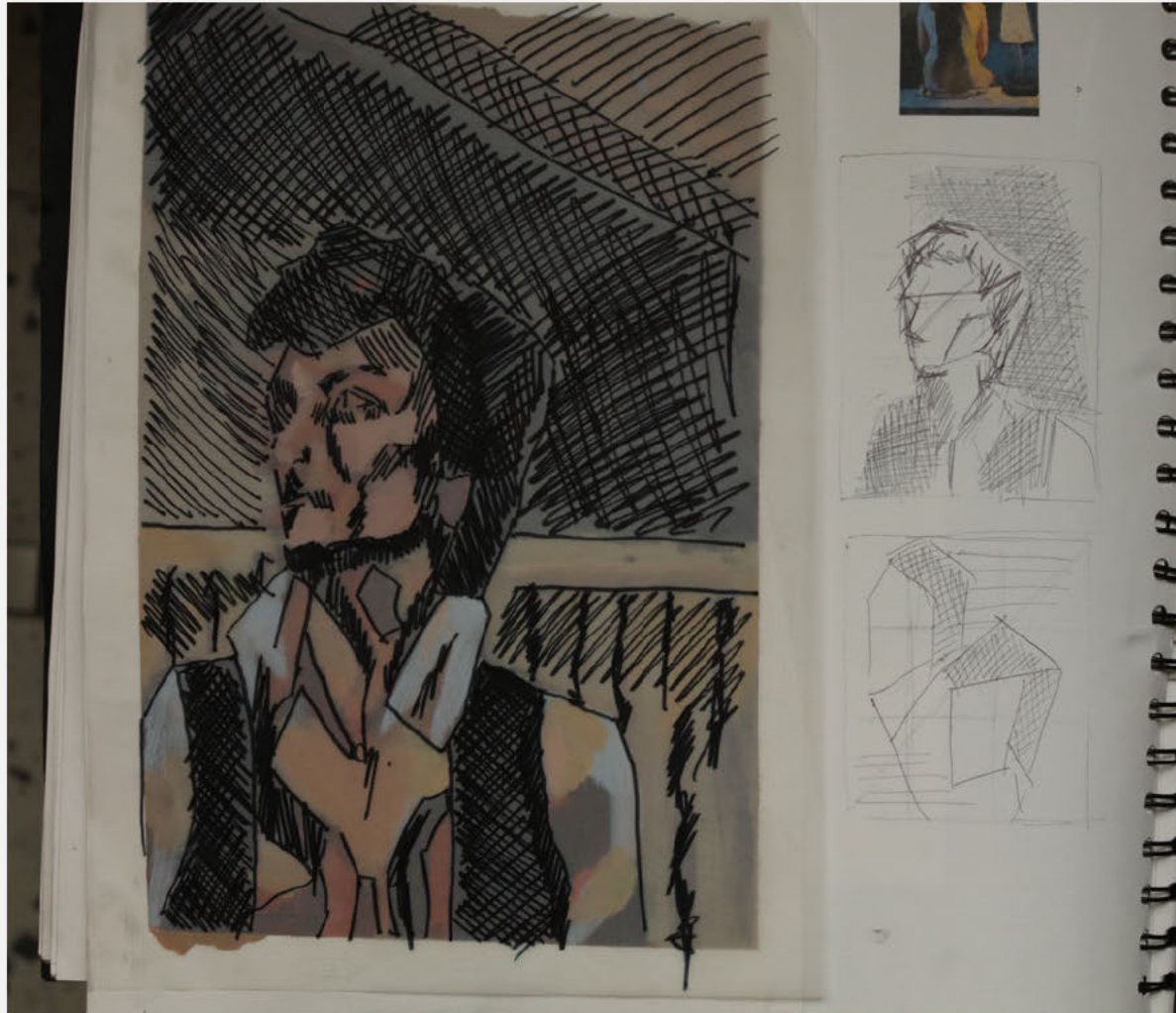


### Evaluation of my project

- To improve my project, I will develop my concepts by using artist research.
- I will use a more experimental style- using larger brushes and sponges to convey sensuality.
- Mood and atmosphere- editing photos.
- Compositional drawings, collages







69 marks, 9FA0, C1


**Intentions over the Summer**

Over the summer I intend to improve my conceptual understanding of artists to develop my own creative voice.

I intend to respond to traditional ideas of gender and the body.

**Practical exploration**

- Using wax resist to explore light, shadow, controlling midtones
- Quick drawings to explore movement
- Painting to explore color and texture



**Artist Influences**

**Portrayal of women**

- Paula Rego
- Cindy Sherman

**Portrayal of sexuality**

- Sylvia Sleigh
- Robert Mapplethorpe

#### Phase 2 Updated Statement of Intent

In the later part of phase 2 I intend to portray desire, investigating its relationship to traditional portrayals of gender. Furthermore, I intend to further scrutinize the relationship between artist and muse, taking inspiration from Cindy Sherman who subverts the traditional male-female relationship between artist and muse.

In the later part of my project, I have been inspired by the work of Sylvia Sleigh whose work subverts expectations of female sexuality by presenting men as objects of desire, therefore disrupting the traditional dynamic of artist and muse. In response to Sleigh's work, I intend to further my portrayal of desire through photography techniques such as low lighting and soft focus. Furthermore, I intend to respond to Tracey Emin's emotional portrayal of sexuality. Emin's deeply moving work intends to unsettle the viewer due to its autobiographical nature.

I would like to gain experience by painting from life, using mirrors and live models to develop my understanding of lighting and proportion. Furthermore, I intend to conduct more investigative photography, experimenting with lighting and focus to convey desire. To develop my conceptual understanding of my project I will visit the Hockney gallery in Cambridge to view a Tracey Emin portrait to further my appreciation of the emotional quality of her work.

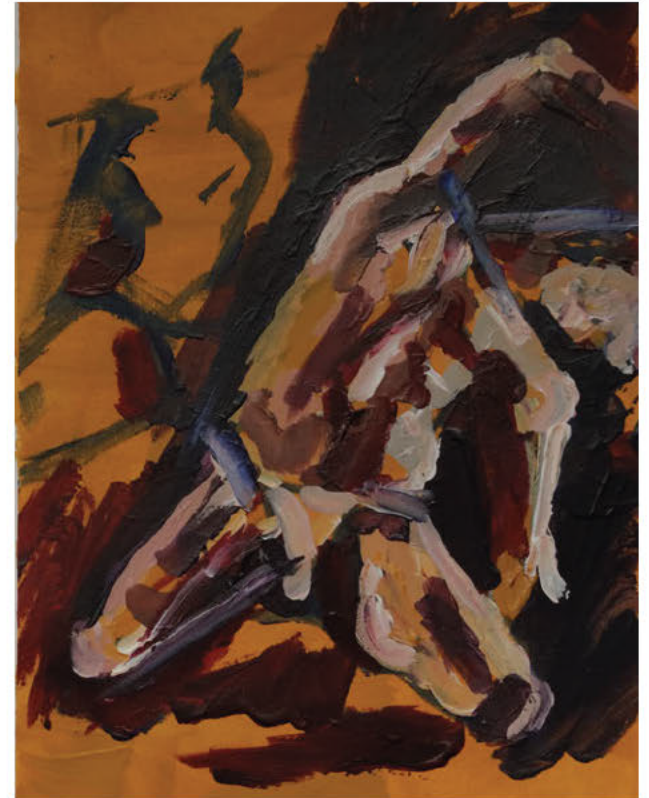
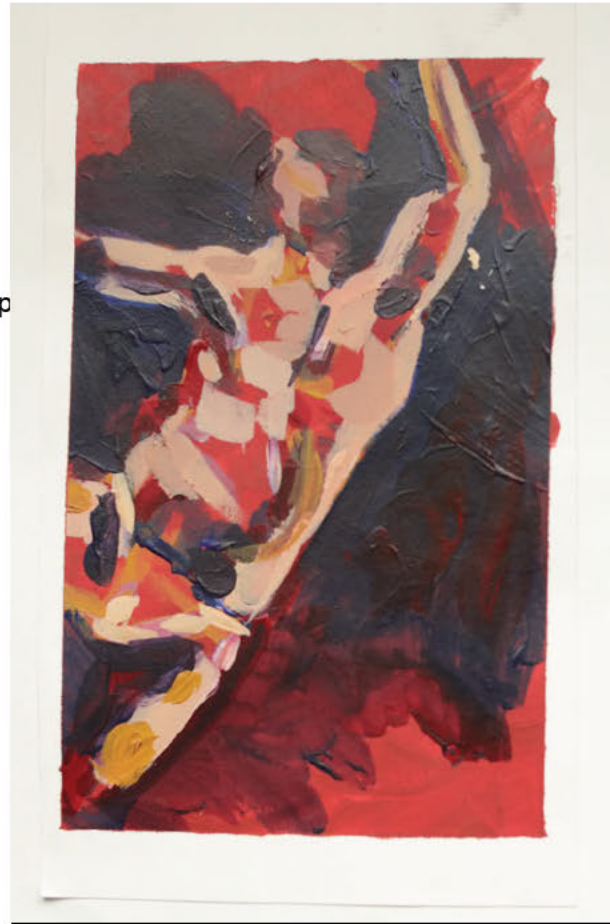
As my project continues, I would like to explore the possibility of painting on to fabric, for example bedsheets, in reference to Cindy Sherman's portrayal of gender and desire in 'untitled film stills.' I will use this technique to develop the tactile quality of my paintings and drawings. Furthermore, I will develop the ambition of my work by increasing the scale of my pieces, allowing me to explore the emotional effect of abstraction, inspired by Tracey Emin's nude paintings. In response to the abstract work of Lee Krasner, I would like to develop more inventive methods of applying paint, perhaps using drips and sponges to present passion.







he p





Cindy Sherman



Personal Connection

- Portrayal of desire and sexuality
- Satire of the male gaze
- Use of traditional diagonal composition

Cindy Sherman's untitled film stills satirise the sexist depiction of women in 20<sup>th</sup> century B movies by dressing up 'into frozen images of the myth of femininity.' A member of the picture generation who were inspired by postmodernism, Sherman was influenced by portrayals of women in mass media and fused low brow and highbrow forms of art, paving the way for a new form of cultural democracy.

Cindy deconstructs the male gaze by playing the part of both photographer and muse which allows her to criticise the traditional objectification of women.



### Review and Reflect

My initial intentions of my project were to use different representations of the human body to interrogate the role of the viewer in art. I initially wanted to present the human body as a natural form, including meat, to present a subject as dehumanized, inspired by the work of Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud.

After encountering the work of Alice Neel I was determined to focus my project on depicting the personal world of my subjects, rather than simply focusing on depicting the human form, shown through my final piece in June which was inspired by 'portrait of a Marxist girl' After reading 'art without men' by Katy Hessel, my work was catalyzed by the work of Paula Rego, whose depictions of powerful women inspired me to explore the representation of women and present women both as powerful and profoundly human. The most influential artist on my project was Sylvia Sleigh whose work subverts expectations of female sexuality by presenting men as objects of desire, therefore disrupting the traditional dynamic of artist and muse.

The work of Paula Rego in the Tate Modern 'capturing the moment' inspired me to explore the possibilities of subverting traditional imagery to comment on traditional gender expectations. Rego subverted traditional techniques used by the Old Masters, describing herself as a 'poacher' who preyed on the work of old masters, alongside her subversion of Portuguese folk stories. Furthermore, my experience of modelling and taking photographs for art and photography A level inspired me to explore the work of Cindy Sherman, whose 'untitled film stills' subverted the traditional artist-muse dynamic with Sherman conducting both roles.

My experience of life drawing, and experimenting with quick pieces, influenced my direction into semi abstract painting. I have decided to explore the possibility of using impasto painting to create tactile texture that evokes sensuality. Furthermore, my experience of collage has inspired me to experiment with more complex compositions. After my experience of collaging I would like to explore the possibilities of using fabric to create textured surfaces to work onto.

As my project continues, I would like to explore the possibility of painting on to fabric, for example bedsheets, in reference to Cindy Sherman's portrayal of gender and desire in 'untitled film stills.' Furthermore, I would like to explore more experimental forms of painting inspired by Frank Auerbach. I would like to explore the possibilities of painting using my fingers, or large brushes and sponges to convey the tactile quality portrayed by Auerbach.

### Practical Development

I intend to use collage to experiment with different, more exciting compositions. I would like to use both collage and impasto painting to create texture that conveys a sensory experience.

I used patterned fabric in reference to Sylvia Sleigh's portrait of Paul Rosano

### Areas of Improvement

- I intend to develop my concept- by taking more photographs and conducting more artist research
- The lighting and atmosphere of my reference photos could be improved- by using more extreme lighting.

### Artist Influence



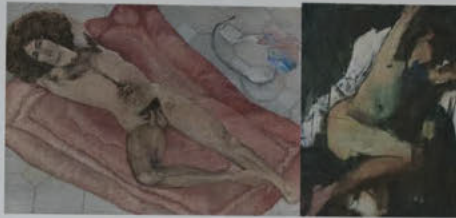




### Practical Development

- In these studies, I intend to explore form and color
- Using both warm and cool tones
- Impasto paint strokes to convey sensuality
- Extreme highlights and shadows to depict the human form, and create atmosphere through low lighting

### Artist Inspiration

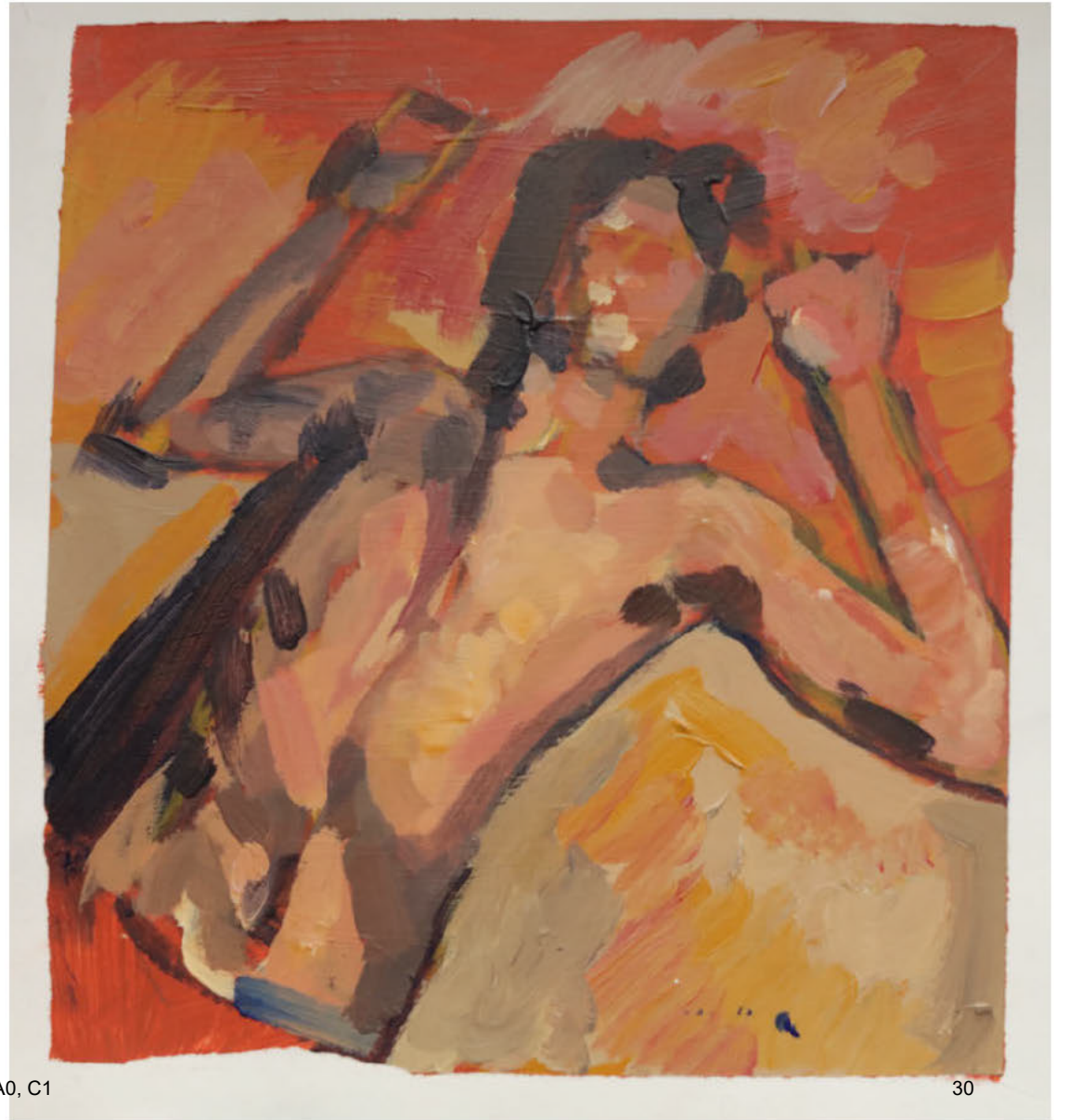


### Areas of Improvement

- Develop realism of color
- Experimental compositions

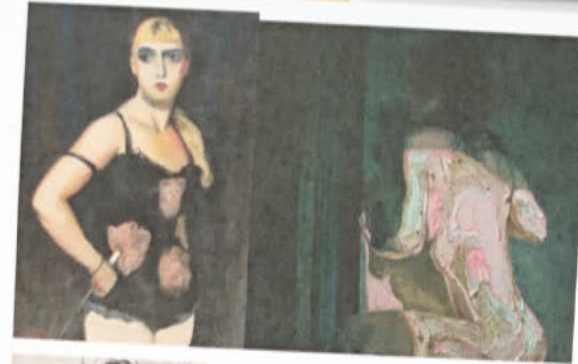






Artist Inspiration

- Xi Pan
- Barbara Krohl
- Pierre Boncompain







Photography

Artist Inspiration -Nan Goldin





Tate Modern

'Capture the Moment'

Inspiration



How I will Respond







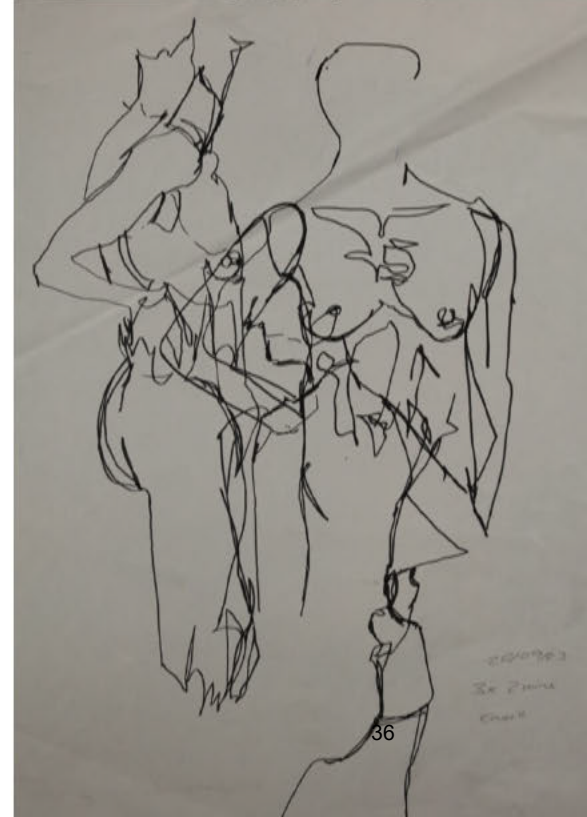
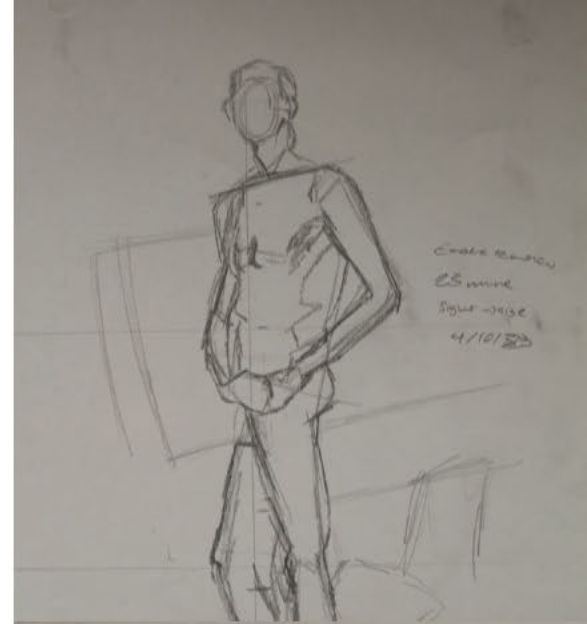
69 marks, 9FA0, C1







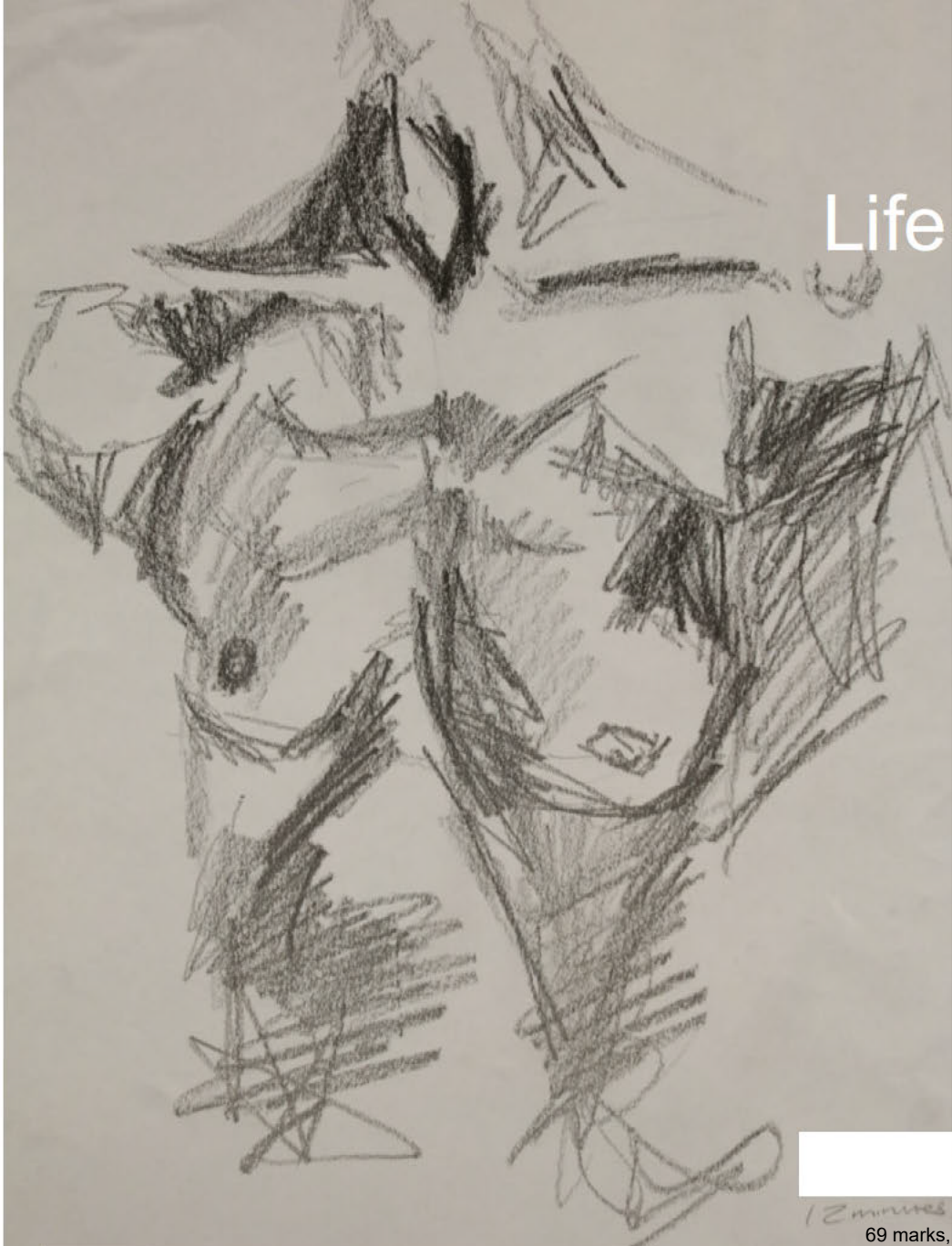
69 marks, 9FA0, C1



36



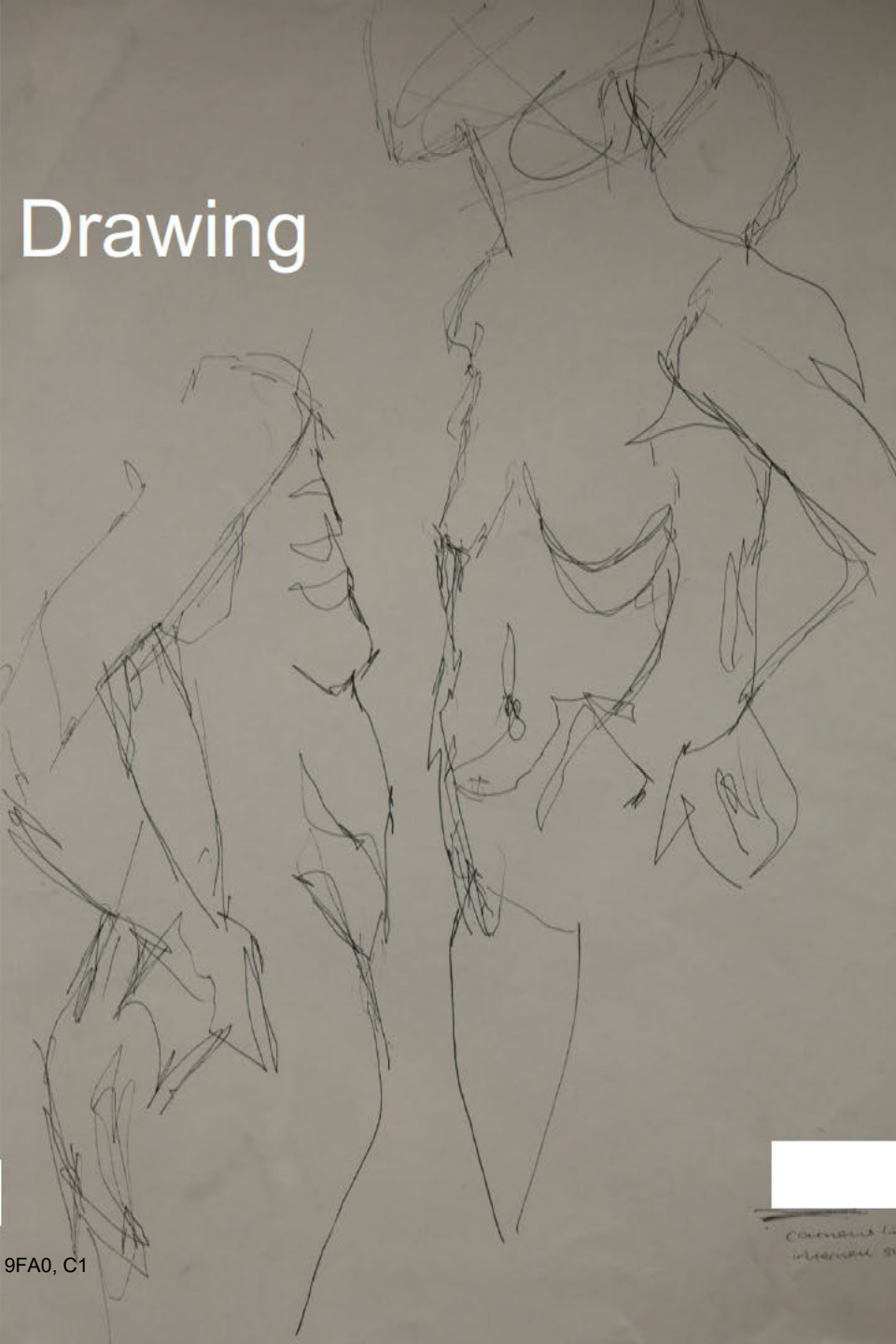
# Life Drawing



12 minutes

69 marks, 9FA0, C1

27/9/23



Carried on  
internal st



69 marks, 9FA0, C1



# Life Drawing



69 marks, 9FA0, C1



39





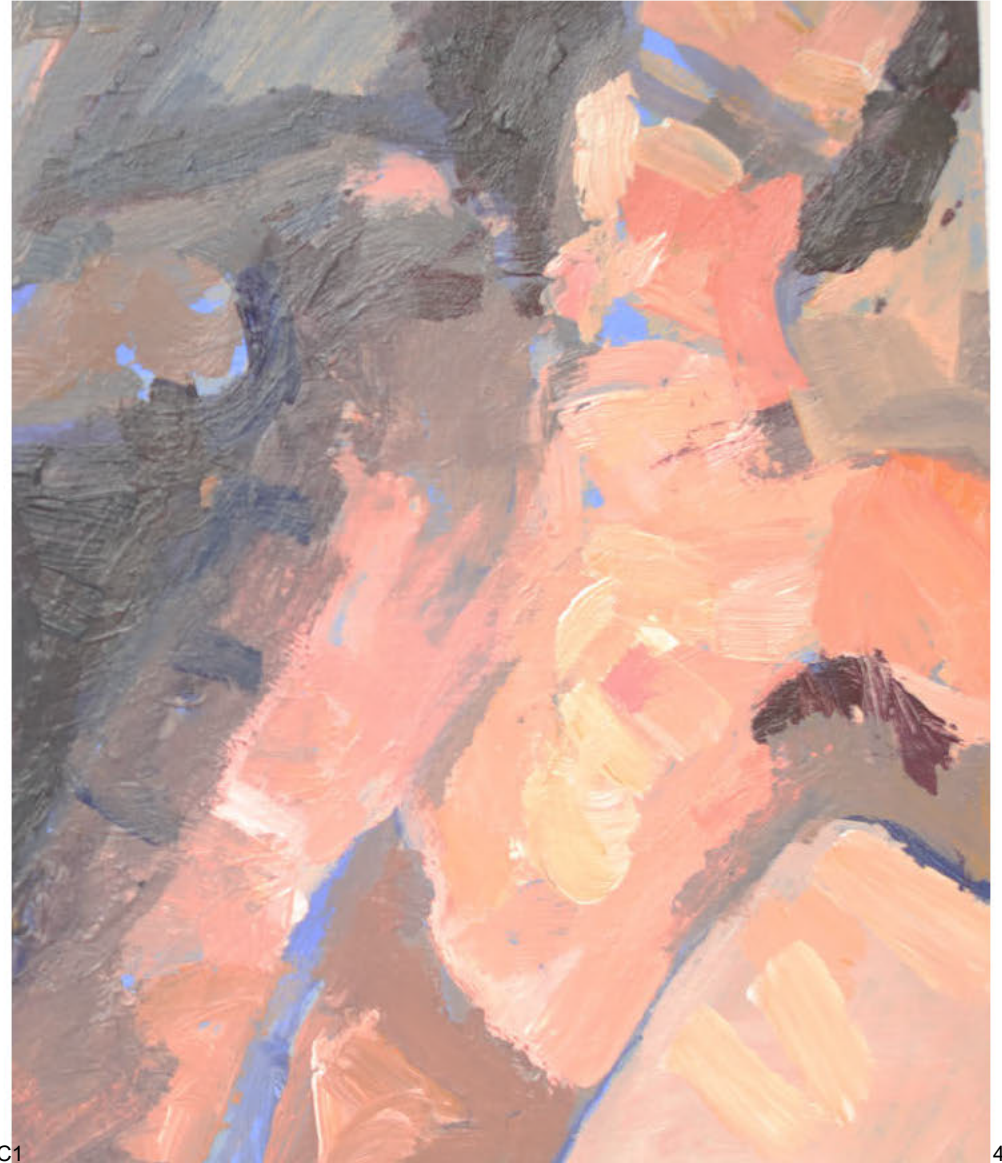
69 marks, 9FA0, C1







69 marks, 9FA0, C1



41



69 marks, 9FA0, C1

#### Intentions



- Iryna Yermolova

#### Practical Development

- Texture of paint- sensory
- Experimenting with cool toned backgrounds to create contrast
- Cool toned background to experiment with harsh lighting
- Harsh outlines inspired by Tracey Emin and Paula Rego
- Focus on proportions- from life drawing- drawing directly with a brush to create energetic brushstrokes

#### Conceptual Development

- Inspiration from the decedent movement
- Influence from sylvia sleigh- present male body through a 'female gaze'
- Bright colors as a celebration of beauty



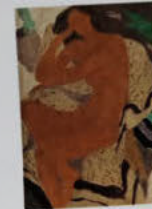


#### Intensions for the Christmas Break

##### Developing Composition

- Collage- Make collages to experiment with different compositions.
- Mono printing
- Draw compositional studies- concentrating on the rule of thirds, diagonal lines.

##### Color

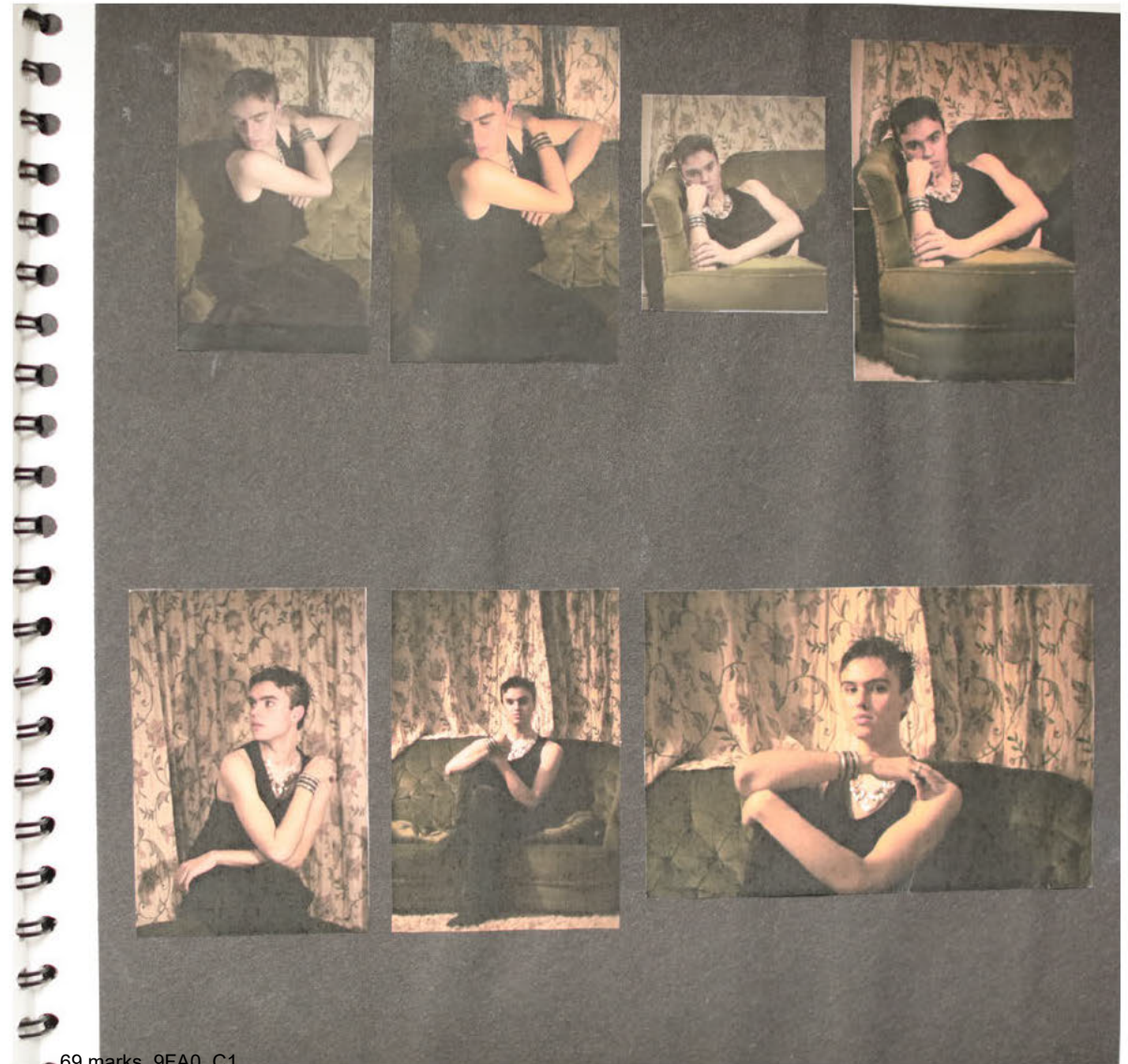
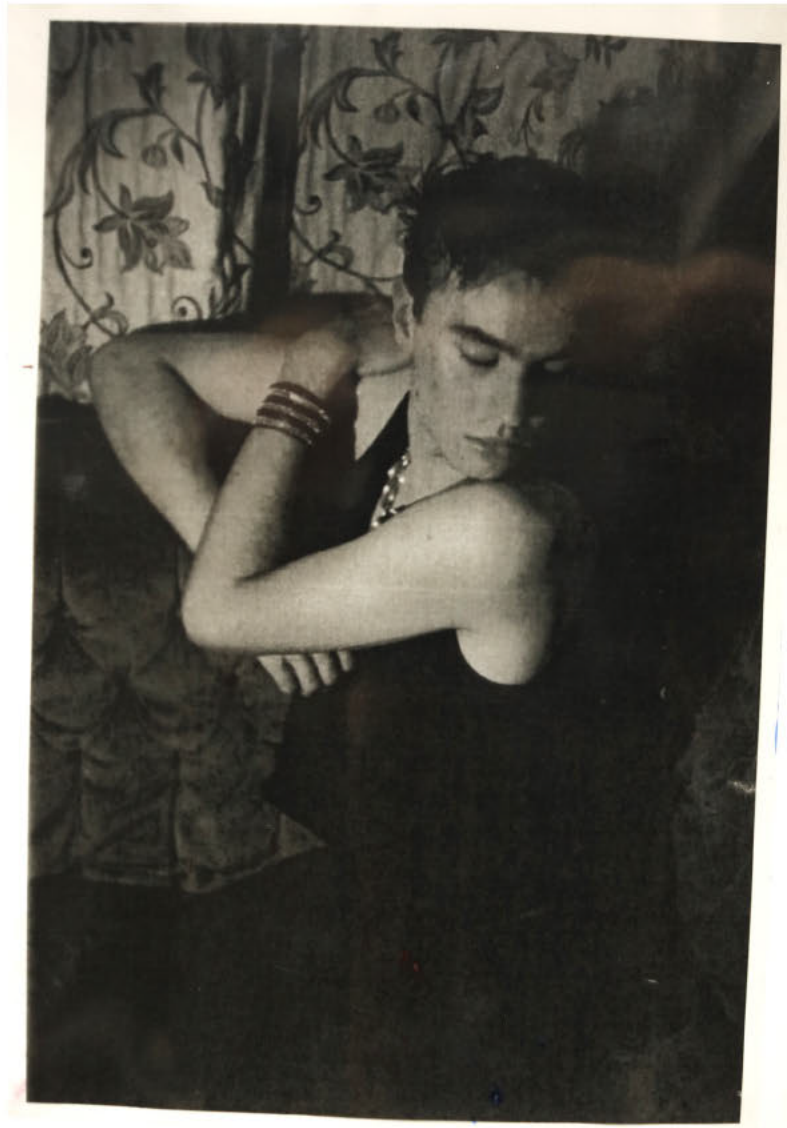


- Experiment with different base coats
- Allow base coats to show through into final painting—experiment with contrast.
- Use both cool and warm colors.

##### Painting



- Experiment with texture
- Use a pallet knife.
- Large scale studies- on canvas- exploring abstraction.







Beauty through a female gaze.  
Unusual composition - complex pose



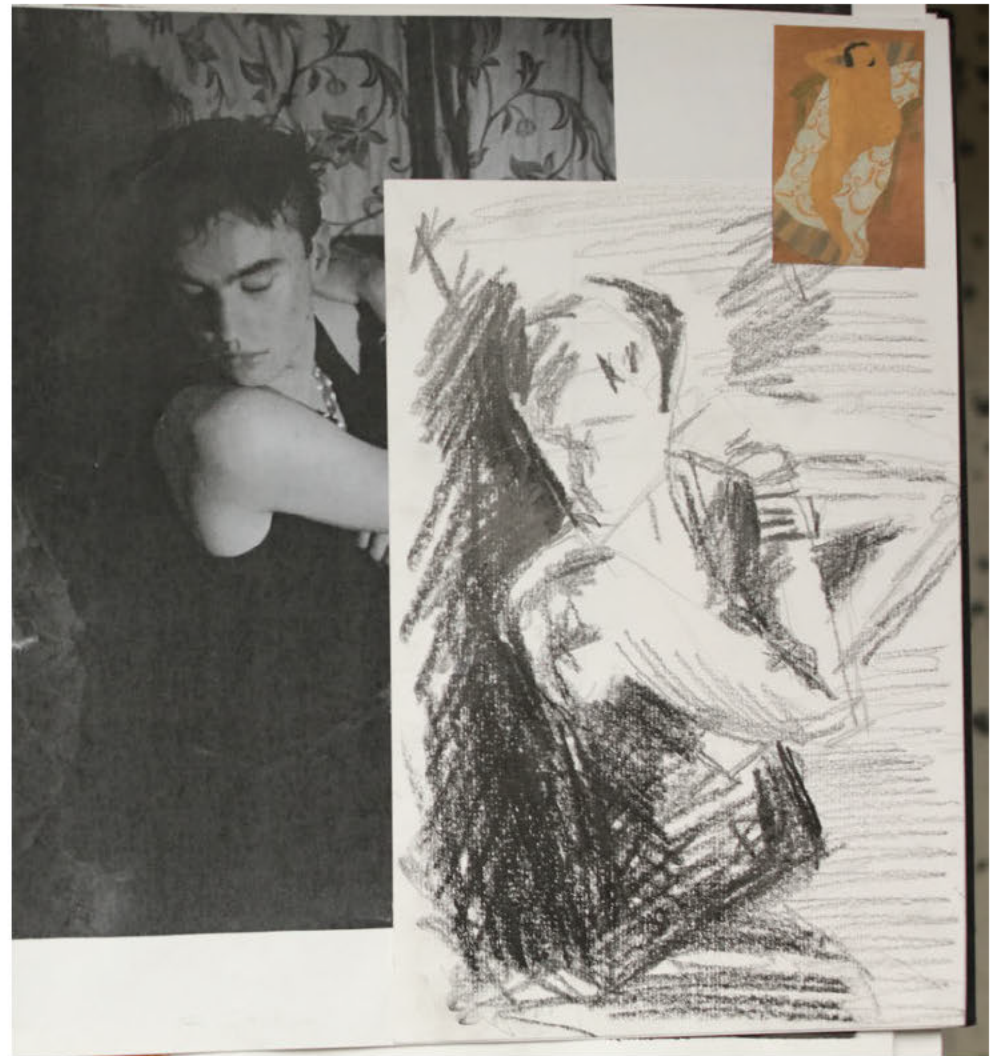
Dance of Salome Leopold Schmetzer  
Sexuality - however, through a male gaze







69 marks, 9FA0, C1





Intensions for Large-Scale Practice Piece

Practical Development

- Using a textured background- to create a sensory impression.
- Focus on abstraction- colors and textures to convey sensuality.
- Interesting composition

Artist Inspiration

Robert Matherbe





Intentions for my Final Piece



Composition

- Diagonal composition
- Fit whole body into frame- make sure proportions are exact.

Color

- Allow base coat to show through.
- Contrasting colors to create depth.
- Bright expressive color- do not allow colors to become muddy or limited.

Painting

- Impasto texture
- Use fingers to create flesh like texture.
- Keep colors blocky- work towards an overall impression.







69 marks, 9FA0, C1







69 marks, 9FA0, C1



50





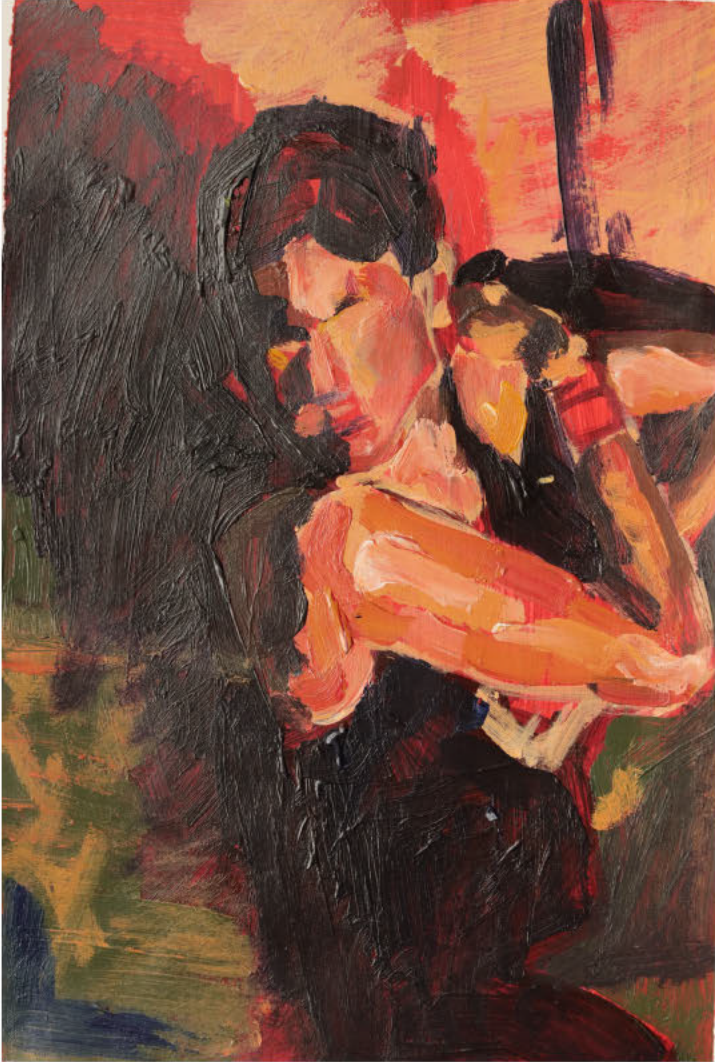
69 marks, 9FA0, C1





69 marks, 9FA0, C1





69 marks, 9FA0, C1





The Portrayal of beauty in art has historically been shaped by the dynamic between a male artist and female muse, in which the woman is rendered powerless by the male gaze. However, after the emergence of Second-Wave feminism in the 1960s, the artists Paula Rego, Sylvia Sleigh and Cindy Sherman have subverted the male gaze by presenting beauty through a female perspective. These artists resonated with my experience of objectification and catalyzed my desire to present beauty through a female perspective. These 3 artists represent the radical feminist belief that the personal is political, which they expressed by subverting iconography of the patriarchy found in art and culture. Rego reflects radical feminist critiques of beauty ideals expressed by the 1970 Miss World Protest by portraying women who are unconfined by the male gaze. Rego's depiction of powerful women influenced my work to consider beauty through a female gaze, presenting women as more than their bodies. In contrast, Sherman's photography reflects the male gaze by depicting sexualized archetypes of women. However, Sherman responds to postmodern feminism by performing the role of both artist and muse, using costumes to present the male gaze as superficial. Sherman's untitled film stills resonated with my experience of gender performance, with Sherman portraying female beauty as a spectacle. I further interrogated this concept by depicting men as both feminine and desirable within my work. After encountering the poster *'Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into the Met. Museum?'* Figure 1 Guerilla Girls (1989) at the Tate Modern, I became interested in subverting the objectification of women. Sleigh's work resonated with my desire to present beauty as beyond patriarchal boundaries. Similarly, to Sherman, Sleigh responds to the male gaze by referencing patriarchal works of art such as Turkish baths by Ingres. However, Sleigh subverts the traditional artist muse dynamic by depicting male figures, thus celebrating male beauty. Like Rego, Sleigh humanizes her subjects by depicting her male lovers and friends as individuals, rather than sexualized archetypes of beauty. Sleigh's work portrays both desire and humanity for her subjects, which has influenced my own work to focus on presenting beauty through a feminist perspective.

Paula Rego (1935-2022) was a Portuguese-British feminist artist whose work presents female figures as powerfully unconfined by patriarchal standards. Rego's work reflects radical feminists' rejection of beauty standards, with her determined figures appearing out of place

within their patriarchal settings. Rego references imagery created by the Old Masters in her work; however, she uses powerful figures to subvert the typical artist-muse dynamic. By referencing historical artworks Rego confronts the male gaze by reimagining it through a feminist lens.

In the piece *'Dancing Ostriches' Figure 2 (1995)* Rego portrays her muse Lila Nunes in feminine ballet tutus, reminiscent of the Disney film *Fantasia*. Rego subverts the feminine anthropomorphism of the ostriches by depicting muscular women, who seem out of place in their frivolous costumes. Rego chose her muse Nunes, whose muscular appearance directly contrasts Disney's feminine ostriches. This is reflected in Rego's uneven composition, with the out of proportion figures seeming larger than life, reflecting how they have stepped out of gender expectations. Germaine Greer<sup>1</sup> (*feminist writer*) argues that

*'Rego's female figures are not victims but conspirators. Among the delusions that they conspire to perpetrate is that of male authority'*

This can be supported by the figures' distorted poses, which contrast with the elegant control of typical ballet dancers. However, the figures' expressions remain composed, which could present how these ballet dancers are content with their appearance, despite it being contradictory to patriarchal expectations. Critic John McEwen argues that Rego using multiple identical figures could reflect Rego's view of aging, with Rego responding

*'The Ostriches couldn't have been done if I hadn't been the age I am. A younger woman wouldn't know what it was like, longing for things that are not gone, because they're inside one, but are inaccessible.'*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Christies.com. (2023). *Paula Rego's Dancing Ostriches: 'Longing for things that are not gone'* | Christie's. [online] Available at: <https://www.christies.com/en/stories/paula-rego-dancing-ostriches-6b081a5a8b04418ea70adc750076aecc>.

<sup>2</sup> Christies.com. (2023). *Paula Rego's Dancing Ostriches: 'Longing for things that are not gone'* | Christie's. [online]

This is emphasized through the mature appearance of the women, which juxtaposes the youthful pink ribbons, satirizing traditional expectations of feminine beauty. The muscular nature of Rego's ballet dancers is exaggerated by her signature black outline, which creates a cartoonish effect that further reflects Rego's source material. The black leotards, while further suggestive of *Fantasia*, also create a somber mood. This could reflect Rego's criticism of patriarchal standards, which she symbolizes through the ballet tutus reminiscent of Edgar Degas' (1834-1917) work. Rego described herself as a *'poacher'* who would use the work of Old Masters to inform her work. Rego's diagonal composition is evocative of Degas' ballet series, which is further reflected in her use of pastels, and muted colors. However, Rego rewrites the sexualization of Degas's muses by portraying her dancers as powerful, and unconfined by patriarchal expectations.

Rego's use of patriarchal imagery, inspired by both the Old Masters and contemporary pop culture, resonated with my understanding of the universality of patriarchy. Rego's *'Dancing Ostriches'* has inspired me to reconsider the male gaze and has influenced my intention to use traditional poses to subvert traditional depictions of beauty.

Sylvia Sleigh (1916-2010) was a Welsh American feminist artist whose work subverts the traditional relationship between artist and muse. Sleigh was inspired by the emerging feminist art movement of the 1960s which would critique the domination of male artists in galleries. In support of these criticisms, Sleigh referenced traditional pieces of art within her own work. While Rego presents her subjects as unconfined by beauty standards, Sleigh's work focuses on the beauty and sensuality of her subjects. By depicting male figures, Sleigh undermines the male gaze by portraying beauty as beyond patriarchal expectations. However, Sleigh uses a realist style to scrutinize her subjects, portraying them as individuals rather than sexualized archetypes. By casting a female gaze onto the male form, Sleigh portrays her subjects as simultaneously sexual and dignified.

Sleigh's piece *'The Turkish Baths' Figure 3 (1970)* references *'Le Bain Turc' Figure 4 (1862)* by Jean August Dominique Ingres. However, Sleigh casts a female gaze onto *'Le Bain Turc'* by presenting the nude figures as humanized. Sleigh reflected that



*To me, women were often portrayed as sex objects in humiliating poses. I wanted to give my perspective. I liked to portray both man and woman as intelligent and thoughtful people with dignity and humanism that emphasized love and joy.*<sup>3</sup>

This is reflected through Sleigh's choice of her husband Lawrence Alloway and her friends as subjects. Sleigh uses a realist style and a simplistic composition to present these figures as familiar individuals. In contrast, in *'Le Bain Turc'*, Ingres uses a complex composition and sexualized poses to dehumanize the female figures. Furthermore, Ingres' use of harmonious cool colors evokes a dream state, which emphasizes how this scene is a topic of male fantasies<sup>4</sup>. In contrast, Sleigh painted *'The Turkish Baths'* from life which results in bright colors that evoke sensuality. Furthermore, Sleigh casts *'a female gaze onto the male body'* by using contrasting colors to evoke realism. This emphasizes her intention to present her figures as individuals, which contrasts with the repetitive figures depicted by Ingres. Linda Nochlin (*art historian*) argues that

*'While not overtly political in intention, [her works representing nude men] are certainly political in effect, if we accept sexuality as one of the major political arenas of our day.'*<sup>5</sup>

This interpretation can be supported by Sleigh's appropriation of Ingres' work, which echoes the activism of the Art Worker's Coalition who campaigned for greater recognition for female artists during the late sixties. Furthermore, Sleigh rejects the separate spheres doctrine by depicting her male figures within a domestic environment. Alternatively, in *'Le Bain Turc'*,

<sup>3</sup> Association, C.A. (2011). *A Tribute to Sylvia Sleigh (1916–2010)*. [online] CAA News | College Art Association. Available at: <https://www.collegeart.org/news/2011/06/16/a-tribute-to-sylvia-sleigh-1916-2010/> [Accessed 4 Jan. 2024].

<sup>4</sup> Lucie-Smith, E. (2011). *Sexuality in Western Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson.

<sup>5</sup> Association, C.A. (2011). *A Tribute to Sylvia Sleigh (1916–2010)*. [online] CAA News | College Art Association. Available at: <https://www.collegeart.org/news/2011/06/16/a-tribute-to-sylvia-sleigh-1916-2010/> [Accessed 4 Jan. 2024].

Ingres portrays his female figures within an exotic fantasy environment to suggest that they are purely sexual.

Sleigh's use of bright colors to evoke sensuality has inspired my investigation into my own perception of beauty. My work builds upon this idea by presenting beauty as beyond patriarchal standards. Furthermore, Sleigh's appropriation of traditional paintings to confront the male gaze has inspired me to consider the possibility of subverting the artist-muse dynamic within my own work.

Cindy Sherman (born 1954) is an American artist whose photographic self-portraits reflect the work of Rego and Sleigh by exploring the construction of female identity and desire within art and culture. All three artists respond to their own experience of the male gaze by depicting iconography of the patriarchy within their work, thus reflecting the emergence of the radical feminist concept that *'the personal is political'* during the 1970s. However, Sherman's work advances this concept by fusing highbrow photography with pop culture, thus reflecting women's universal experience of the male gaze. Furthermore, while Rego subverts the male gaze by portraying women as powerful, and unconfined by feminine beauty, Sherman's photography reflects the male gaze by depicting sexualised archetypes of women. While Mira Scor (*writer*) argues that Sherman's photography uses a *'male camera'*<sup>6</sup> this can be disputed by Sherman's role as both artist and muse, with her use of costume and performance reflecting the superficiality of the male gaze.

In Sherman's *'Untitled Film Still' (1977)* series she responds to the emerging postmodern feminist movement of the 1970s by performing the role of both photographer and muse. By using costumes and makeup to perform a variety of *'frozen images of the myth of femininity'*, Sherman comments on the superficiality of the male gaze. In *'Untitled Film Still #6' Figure 5 (1977)* Sherman depicts herself on tussled bedsheets, semi-undressed. Sherman looks upwards

<sup>6</sup> Kérchy, A. (2003). The Woman 69 Times: Cindy Sherman's 'Untitled Film Stills'. *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, [online] 9(1), pp.181–189. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41274221>.

towards an invisible viewer representative of the male gaze. By acknowledging the presence of a voyeur figure, Sherman allows her female viewers to dissect their own internalised *'male camera'*. In *'Untitled Film Still #6'* Sherman performs the archetypal sexualised housewife, signified by Sherman's costume of sexualised loungewear. Anna Kerchy (*writer*)<sup>7</sup> argues that Sherman's photos depict *'fetishized bodies, nameless pin up models, objects of the male gaze.'* However, Sherman acknowledges the constraints posed by the male gaze by presenting her characters as trapped within the feminine archetypes that they embody. In the piece, Sherman's figure is too large to be contained by the composition, which connotes the patriarchal constraints placed upon objectified stereotypes of women. Furthermore, Sherman criticizes female beauty standards by depicting a mutilated female body. In *'Untitled Film Still #6'*, Sherman's legs bend unnaturally, and are obscured by the edge of the composition, symbolizing the constraints of patriarchy. Sherman responds to the sexualization of women in mass media through her use of black and white film in reference to B-Movies. Influenced by the 'Picture Generation' of artists, Sherman fuses highbrow photography with pop culture, which allows her work to reflect its cultural landscape. The *Untitled Film Stills* exhibition was sponsored by Madonna, which demonstrates Sherman's association with *'a society of spectacle'* (*Anna Kerchy*), and her acknowledgment the heterogenous identities performed by women in mass media. In *'Untitled Film Still #52' Figure 6 (1977)* Sherman performs the role of a femme fatale, which is connoted by the pulp novel to the figures right. Through Sherman's skillful use of mise-en-scene to depict feminine archetypes, she comments on the superficiality of the male gaze. By presenting the objectification of women as multifaceted, Sherman responds to the radical feminist notion that *'the personal is political'*, allowing her work to resonate with women's universal performance of femininity.

Sherman's work holds particular relevance within the current context of liberal feminist sexual liberation. Sherman's work is uniquely able to reflect the male gaze, while simultaneously

<sup>7</sup> Kérchy, A. (2003). The Woman 69 Times: Cindy Sherman's 'Untitled Film Stills'. *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, [online] 9(1), pp.181–189. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41274221>.

challenging its patriarchal control. Sherman's work has influenced my understanding of the male gaze and allowed me to dissect my own performance of femininity. My own work builds upon this understanding by presenting desire through my own understanding of beauty, rather than a constructed ideal.

In conclusion, Rego, Sleight and Sherman subvert the traditional relationship between artist and muse to present desirability through a female gaze. These artists have inspired me to confront my own experience of the male gaze and subvert patriarchal expectations by presenting beauty through my own perspective. At the beginning of my project, Rego's work resonated with my experience of objectification through her presentation of women as unconfined by beauty expectations. Rego's portrayal of powerful female figures has allowed me to confront my own experiences of objectification. In Rego's dancing Ostriches she portrays female figures who are unconfined by the male gaze. This influenced me to present women as individuals, removed from patriarchal standards. In **Figure 7** I positioned the figure turning away from the viewer, which represents a rejection of the male gaze. Furthermore, the contrast between the dull white of the background and the yellow clothing signifies determination in the face of patriarchal oppression. My project developed significantly after encountering the work of Sleight, who inspired me to reject the male gaze by presenting beauty through a female perspective. Sleight's depiction of male beauty inspired me to express desire through art, thus subverting my own experiences of the male gaze. In **Figure 8** I intended to subvert the traditional relationship between artist and muse by presenting the male body as desirable. I used loose brushwork to express my own feelings of desire, and a bright orange to evoke sensuality in reference to Sleight's work. As my project developed, I became more interested in Sherman's use of subversive irony to expose the objectification of women, as it resonated strongly with my own performance of femininity. Sherman's fusion of high and low brow art reflects the universality of the male gaze, which resonated with my interest in the radical feminist notion that the personal is political. By performing sexualized archetypes, Sherman acknowledges the superficiality of the male gaze. In my own work I have built upon this idea by rejecting the male gaze in favor of my own perception of Beauty.

## Figures

Figure 1



Guerrilla Girls

*Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum*

Screenprint on paper

1989

Image: 280 × 710 mm

frame: 361 × 791 × 30 mm

Figure 2



Paula Rego

*Dancing Ostriches*

Pastel on paper mounted on aluminium

1995

(161.5 × 152.6 cm)

Figure 3





Sylvia Sleigh  
*The Turkish Bath*  
Oil on Canvas  
1973  
193 x 259.1cm  
Figure 4



Jean Auguste-Dominique Ingres  
*Le Bain Turc*  
Oil on Canvas  
1862  
108 cm x 110 cm  
Figure 5



Cindy Sherman  
*Untitled Film Still #6*  
Gelatin silver print  
1977

24 x 16.5 cm

Figure 6



Cindy Sherman  
*Untitled Film Still #52*  
Gelatin silver print

1977

24 x 16.5 cm

Figure 7



Figure 8



## Bibliography

Association, C.A. (2011). *A Tribute to Sylvia Sleigh (1916–2010)*. [online] CAA News | College Art Association. Available at: <https://www.collegeart.org/news/2011/06/16/a-tribute-to-sylvia-sleigh-1916-2010/> [Accessed 4 Jan. 2024].

Buchanan, B., Burko, D., Garcia, O., Marter, J. and Schneemann, C. (2011). *2011 Honor Report*. [online] Available at: <https://nationalwca.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/LTA2011.pdf> [Accessed 4 Jan. 2024].

Christies.com. (2023). *Paula Rego's Dancing Ostriches: 'Longing for things that are not gone'* | Christie's. [online] Available at: <https://www.christies.com/en/stories/paula-rego-dancing-ostriches-6b081a5a8b04418ea70adc750076aeec>.

Golden, E. and Kenny, K. (1982). Sexuality in Art: Two Decades from a Feminist Perspective. *Woman's Art Journal*, 3(1), p.14. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/1357914>.

Kérchy, A. (2003). The Woman 69 Times: Cindy Sherman's 'Untitled Film Stills'. *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, [online] 9(1), pp.181–189. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41274221>.

Kristen Gaylord (2016). *Cindy Sherman*. [online] The Museum of Modern Art. Available at: <https://www.moma.org/artists/5392>.

Lucie-Smith, E. (2011). *Sexuality in Western Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson.

Macedo, A.G. (2008). Paula Rego's Sabotage of Tradition: 'Visions' of Femininity. *Luso-Brazilian Review*, [online] 45(1), pp.164–181. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30219063> [Accessed 6 Oct. 2022].

Manchester, E. (2004). 'Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into the Met. Museum?', *Guerrilla Girls, 1989* | Tate. [online] Tate. Available at:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/guerrilla-girls-do-women-have-to-be-naked-to-get-into-the-met-museum-p78793>.

Mcewen, J. and Rego, P. (2006). *Paula Rego*. London ; New York, Ny: Phaidon.

Semmel, J. and Kingsley, A. (1980). Sexual Imagery in Women's Art. *Woman's Art Journal*, 1(1), p.1. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/1358010>.

Sherwin, S. (2016). *Dancing Ostriches is an unsettling examination of female body image*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/sep/30/dancing-ostriches-is-an-unsettling-examination-of-female-body-image>.