

IS WRITTEN REPORT

GROUP 5-20

Project Members: Toh Han Chin, Joseph Teo, Tan Hong Xiang

Project Name: Urban Loneliness

Objective

Our aim of the project was to illustrate scenes depicting urban loneliness in a local setting, to evoke feelings of despondency and provoke thought and emotion from the audiences.

Main Idea

The main theme was to capture loneliness in vastly different contexts, to show how loneliness can manifest anywhere in anyone. In each piece, we aimed for a different vibe, even while simultaneously linking the pieces up in a story. Joseph's piece shows a person taking a taxi home after a party alone, Hong Xiang's piece shows what the person sees when he first steps into his house, while Han Chin's piece depicts the guy lying on his bed.

Inspirations

Gaining inspiration from the book "the beating and other stories" by Dave Chua, we sought to portray loneliness in urban settings, particularly scenes we are familiar with in Singapore. In a fast paced society, where development is rapid and vast, people who fail to keep up with the progress and change are often left behind. We wanted to embody that experience in our artworks and express the dystopian nature of urban growth.

Artist References

Artists that we looked to for reference in our art pieces were Sam Mckinnis, David Hockney, Edward Hopper and Sarah Choo. With Han Chin's piece, he gained inspiration from Sam Mckinnis' work of Lorde's melodrama album cover, and tried to reproduce it in a similar fashion with another model instead. Han Chin's piece shares similar elements to Sam Mckinnis' work, such as the use of guiding lines and having a cool colour obscure a warmer colour to give a feeling of isolation. The obvious use of brush strokes evoke a sense of turmoil, while the cool colours used give a vibe of inhospitality and unfamiliarity, emphasising the disconnect between people.



With Hong Xiang's piece, he gained traction for the idea when analysing the elements within Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks" that may allude to a disconnect within society, and took on David Hockney's painting styles which had roots in cubism, minimalism and modern art. With his piece, Hong Xiang took a different route from Han Chin, attempting to project a cosy and welcoming environment with the use of warmer colors and the invisibility of brush strokes, to disillusion the audience into thinking it was a safe, normal scene. However, this ideal is simultaneously being rejected by the addition of distorted and unrealistic objects that instill a sense of unfamiliarity. At liminal spaces, the calm atmosphere of the scene is destroyed subtly by patches and distortions, playing with the underlying layers of colors beneath, essentially finding a middle ground between David Hockney and Edward Hopper's styles. As we move about our day, we never let ourselves stop, to take a break from the accelerating treadmill of responsibility and expectations. But, on the seldom occasions we do, we indulge in the tranquility and solitude of it all, and we are made aware of the space that surrounds us, and how despite indulging in the standstill in time, we hate being in it, because we are conscious of how isolated we are from the world by keeping to ourselves. This instills a sense of helplessness and anxiety, as we feel left behind, outdated and dispensable, in a society where mortality of purpose is rampant. As such, in his painting, Hong Xiang tried to illustrate the absence of time, and through the use of abstractism make the painting appear inviting, while simultaneously abjecting the reader from the scene through the use of distortions to mimic an illusion, something that can never be achieved. Essentially, it is a piece that aims to enrapture the audience and yet also reject them with signs of danger.



With Joseph's piece, he has decided to go with a more dramatic and colourful scene, with colours that are undefined by a palette. The blurred out dots of colour in a bokeh fashion emulate a soft vibe, making the night scene more muted even with the numerous colors employed within this piece. The invisibility of brush strokes keep the atmosphere sentient, voiding the painting of crude textures. The line between an acrylic and a water-colour medium is blurred with the translucency of elements in the painting and the inclusion of bokeh lights. This allows for a more soft painting, with dulled vibes, illustrating the other side of loneliness in juxtaposition to Han Chin's tempestuous and volatile painting and Hong Xiang's toneless and monotonous piece. In some sense, it provides a mid point between the two paintings, serving to bridge the gap and make the project's art pieces internally coherent amongst all 3 paintings.



Progress Documentation

Composition

Since February, there has been many drafts and conceptualisations of the project we made to prepare for our final pieces. We tried to visualise our paintings by taking photographs.



Here are some of our first drafts and attempts at conceptualisation, trying to add more elements into our paintings to allude to loneliness.

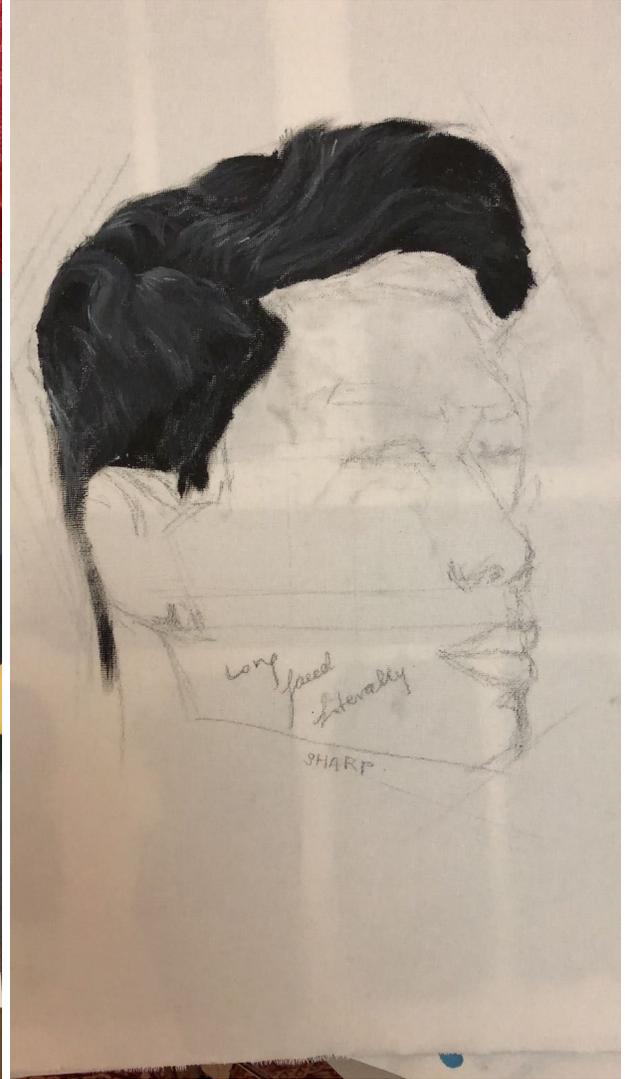
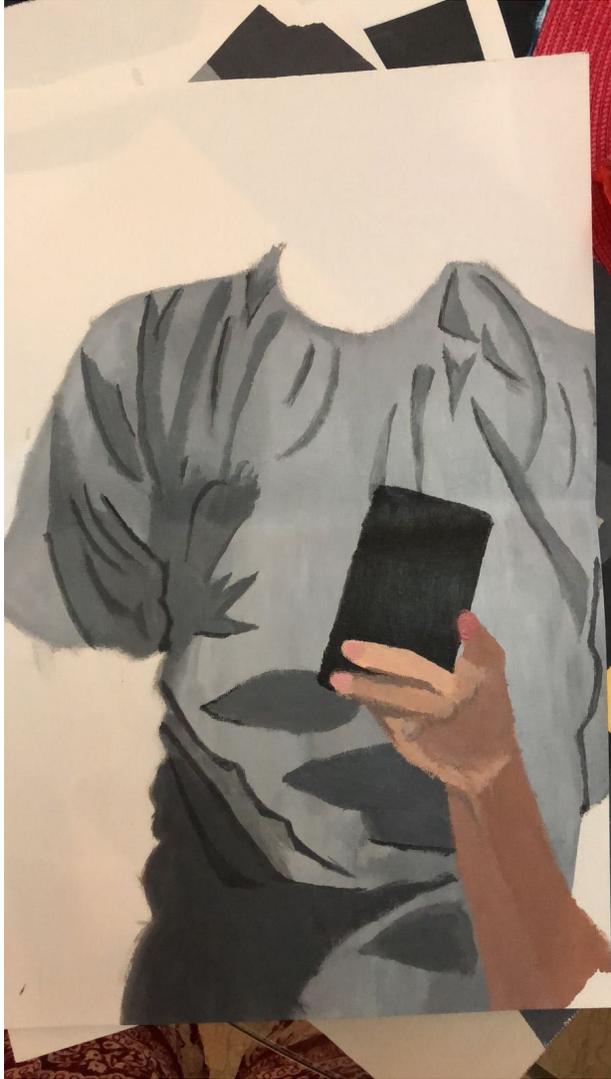


Medium Experimentation

Ultimate Aim: to utilise different styles to convey different emotions, such as Hong Xiang's flat minimalistic style, to Han Chin's representational realism painting style.

Main Medium: Acrylic Paintings on Canvas





Progress of Final Work

After finalizing on the details we wanted to include in our paintings, we started drafting and experimenting with how the piece would look on canvas, and allowed us to visualise our final products.



Final Pieces

Han Chin's piece:



Joseph's Piece:



Hong Xiang's Piece:



Group Reflection

There has been many changes made along the way, and consultations from external sources that has built us towards our final products, and ultimately, we have gained an immense amount of knowledge through this process. There were many incidents that we had, and problems that arose, such as our ability to make our project internally coherent across all 3 pieces, despite the varying styles and themes. There were also times of disconnect within our group, which allowed us to grow further individually, and be less dependent on each other, but eventually we still came together and helped one another through this journey. There were certainly many takeaways from this project, and many lessons learnt, all diverse and consequential.

Han Chin's Reflections:

This project was a risk for me. I had very limited experience in visual arts and acrylic paint before embarking on the project. I spent a lot of time redoing my painting and experimenting. Each deadens and failed painting definitely taught me to put down my own unrealistic expectations of instantly nailing it, as well as persevering through feelings of inadequacy. This project was very enjoyable and fulfilling as I was able to pursue something I have always been interested in and overcome the fear of failure.

Joseph's Reflections:

I've always enjoyed art as more of a hobby so taking on this project was a whole new experience for me. There were many ups and downs from the beginning but, in its entirety, the project was extremely enjoyable. From being unable to blend the right colour after many attempts, to finally blending the right colour and experiencing that sense of accomplishment once the brush touched the canvas. One point to be mentioned would definitely be the factor of time within this project. As I have never attempted an art project on such a scale before, I quite severely underestimated the amount of time it would take to transfer the concept from mind to canvas, especially since I myself am a slow painter. As a result, there were several parts of the painting that may seem rushed at a closer look. If I could do it all over again, I would, and I would do it much better. The potential of the concept I took on was much more than that shown on the final product, therefore I am most definitely unsatisfied with the outcome. However, this project does not solely focus on the result, but also the process. The countless hours our project group spent together in the art studio, after school and during the June holidays, painting and chatting together, is something that will remain etched in my memory for the time to come. While I do feel regret when looking back on this project, I will always reminisce and cherish the precious memories and experiences that I have attained.

Hong Xiang's Reflections:

Before embarking on this project, i had many things i wanted to paint, numerous directions for me to follow. Following through it however, i've realised that working in a team meant compromise, and i realised how ambitious my ideas seemed. Through this journey, i've taken away many technical skills in the process of designing, and in terms of teamwork, transcended the illiberal mindset of believing that there can never be 2 people who can work on the same art piece, much less 3. Although there were many moments of disconnect and mishap between us, we could still work together and build each other up, resolving our conflicts in order for the success of the group. I saw this project as something that was pervasive, something that was an implicit understanding shared amongst our society, especially a society

as competitive as Singapore. My personal end goal of the piece, and project, was to provoke some emotion or thought, expressing a common concern that we all feel helpless towards resolving.