

## 5-08

# A SILHOUETTE OF IDENTITY

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## CONCEPTUALISATION

We decided to explore the nuances of identity and bring to light its different aspects and meanings. We feel identity is human and personal, yet also complex and abstract. By peeling its layers, we aim to, through our artwork, present a thought-provoking perspective on what identity means and invite viewers of our work to reflect on what has shaped their identity and how they picture themselves.

## Ideas on Identity

We brainstormed on various aspects of 'identity' that we can best represent. All these ideas are closely related to humanity and focus on the changes of the world that translate to how we interpret ourselves.

### 1. Initial Ideas

We initially thought of ideas such as duality in emotions; industrialisation; and the old being replaced with the new. Later, we decided to represent identity as a physical element through a knight reuniting with his homeland, by which one commonly identifies himself. However, we scrapped this idea as this representation is clichéd and ineffective in portraying identity at a personal level.



### 2. Final Idea

We finally settled upon the idea of two human figures juxtaposed against each other with different backgrounds to represent identity. We believe this idea encompasses our intended message on identity and portrays it in a refreshing style.

## USE OF MEDIA

We decided to use colour pencils and digital painting to represent the different "eras" of past and present selves (traditional vs modern).

## INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORK

The distinct halves, a young girl and the same character grown up, surrounded by 'memories' of that time-period, show the disconnection between the two identities, and the desire for the grown-up to reconnect with her younger self. The contrast in media shows the distance between them. Ideas like work-life, jadedness, displacement, longing and nostalgia, which shape our personal identity, are reflected.

## PREPARATORY WORK

### Artists' References

We took inspiration from these artists:

#### Kirsty Partridge

Photorealistic subject matters drawn with colour pencils



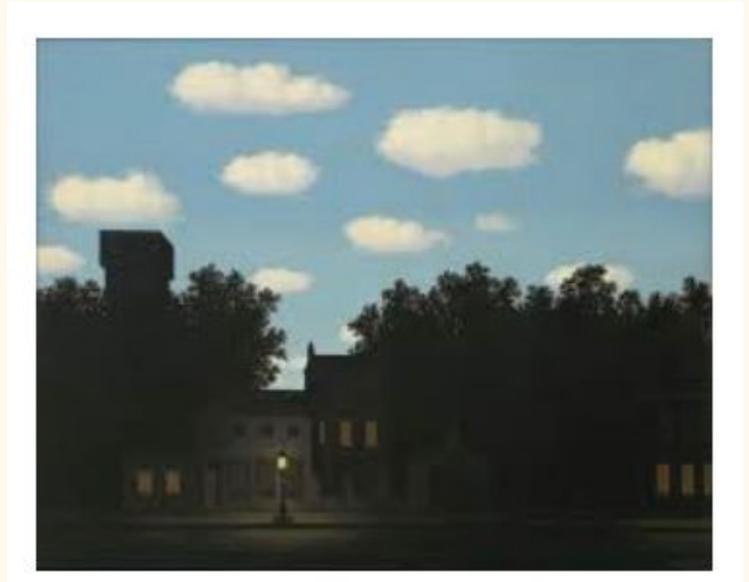
#### Alberto Seveso

Cohesively combines realism and surrealism in digital works



## Rene Magritte

Themes of duality



## Frida Kahlo

Composition, subject matters and theme; surrealism



## Research on Theme

A question we often ask ourselves at the inception of this art-making process is: why do we want to make this artwork?

We wanted to create an artwork that the audience is able to identify with, and is purposeful and provides greater insight into human feelings. To look for inspiration, we consulted various sources:

### Personal Life and Observations

Looking around, it is not uncommon to see working adults and students alike, set aside less time for ourselves, unlike when a child, neglecting or forgetting our own hobbies and interests. Though futile, we yearn for the ability to return to childhood, to escape from adult work troubles.

### Movies

As we are dealing with the contrast between childhood and adult work life, and individuals who give up their dreams for work, we turned to the local film *Singapore Dreaming* that represents the lives of working adults who suffer extreme work-life stress and lose the chance to realise their aspirations when they were younger.

These movies give us a realistic insight on adult work life and frame our thought process in the narrative behind our artwork.



### Articles

Newspapers and websites also frequently report on adult-life stress:

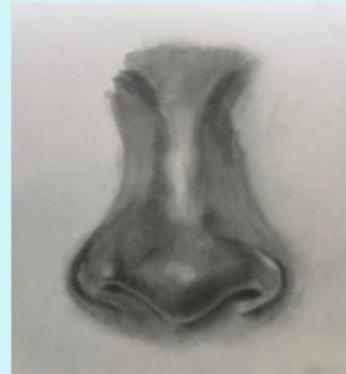
- Complaints about busy schedules as the media actually celebrates work and busyness (Harvard Business Review)  
<https://hbr.org/2016/12/research-why-americans-are-so-impressed-by-busyness>
- Childhood memories are important in shaping how we think (The Atlantic)  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/07/why-childhood-memories-d-isappear/397502/>

## Practising Media

### Subject Matter Study

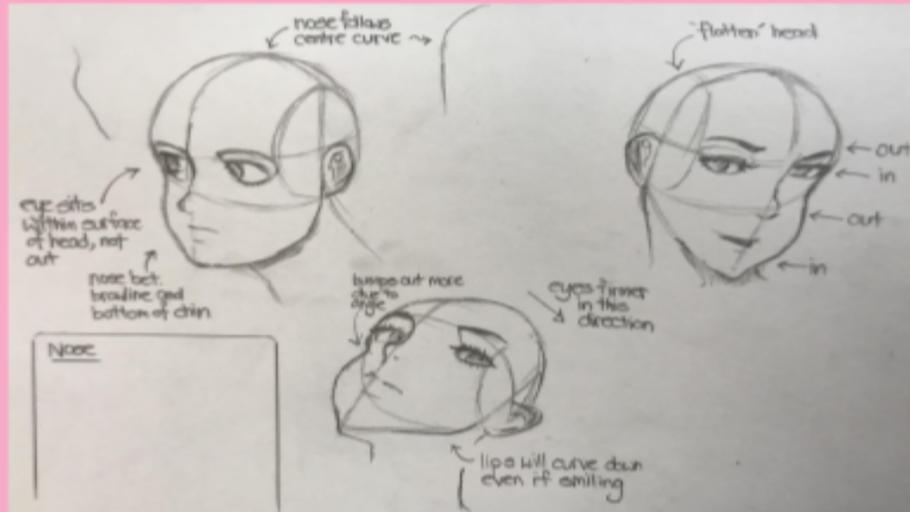


Use of watercolour to emulate a "dripping" effect:  
Representation of slow fading  
and vanishing of distinct  
identities



Close study of facial features on the 'past self' female figure; drawn in pencil

### Observational study of drawing the face



Sketches of surrounding 'memory' subject matters: portrayal of the transition between identities of the 'past self' and 'present self' in a harsh and chaotic light

Coloured drafts of subject matters (human figure + fusion between past and present eras in surrounding 'memory')



## Rough Compositions



Experimentations of texture - crushing the artwork paper to create a "worn-out" and olden look as a symbol of the 'past era'



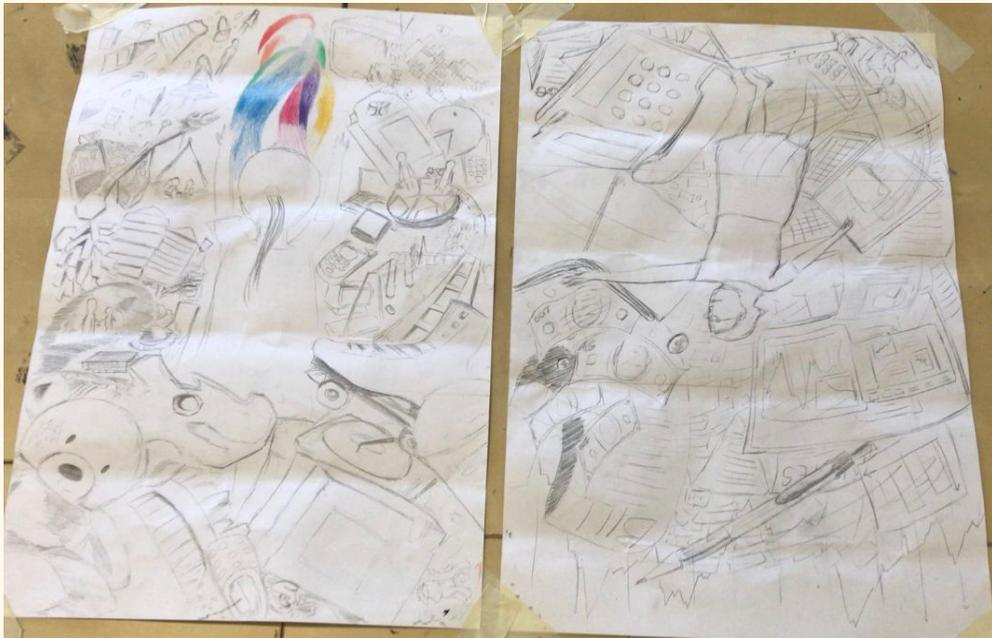
Experimentation of scale manipulation - contrasting surrounding objects with main subject matter through juxtaposition in size



Exploring composition of surrounding 'memories' or subject matters for 'past self' on an irregularly-shaped base; some subject matters being used in the final artwork

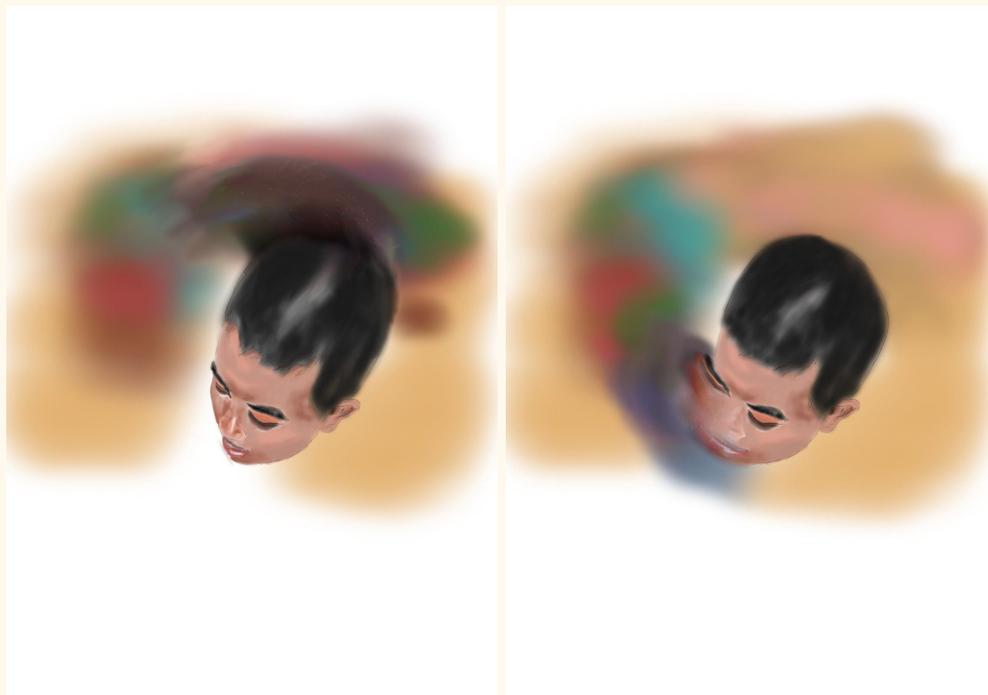


Exploration of overall artwork composition



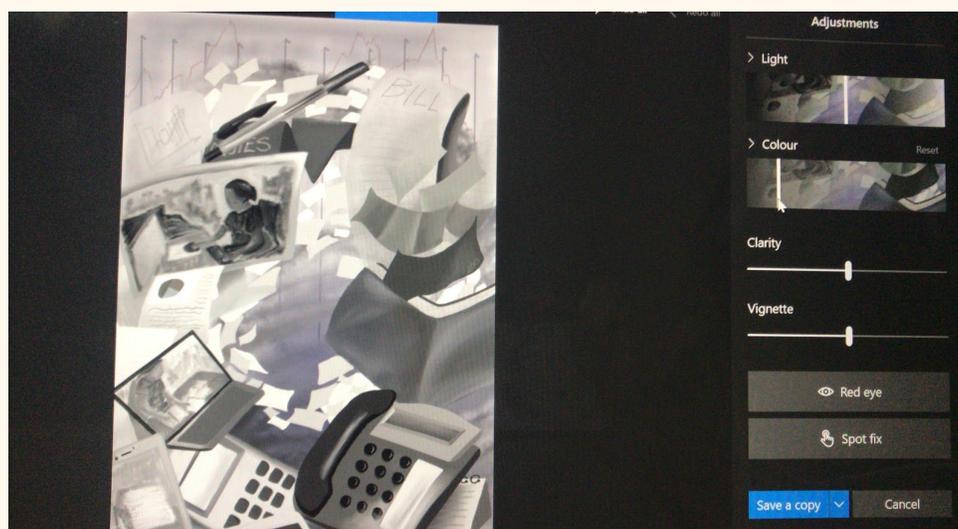
## Digital Painting

Smearing main figure into background to create a blurred effect



## ARTISTIC PROCESSES

Colour Pencil	Digital Painting
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish idea</li> <li>2. Come up with rough composition (each section demarcated with common subject matters e.g. festivities; game characters)</li> <li>3. Colour in objects and intersperse with memories</li> <li>4. Colour in girl (pencil)</li> <li>5. Coat in matte finish, mount on board</li> </ol> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Test out media as we are new to it</li> </ol>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Establish idea and composition</li> <li>3. Paint subject matters and background</li> <li>4. Paint human figure</li> <li>5. Combine human with background through photo manipulation; print, coat in matte finish, and mount on board</li> </ol>



(Editing of colours of digital painting)

We constantly checked against either first-hand or online photos to ensure realism, such as:

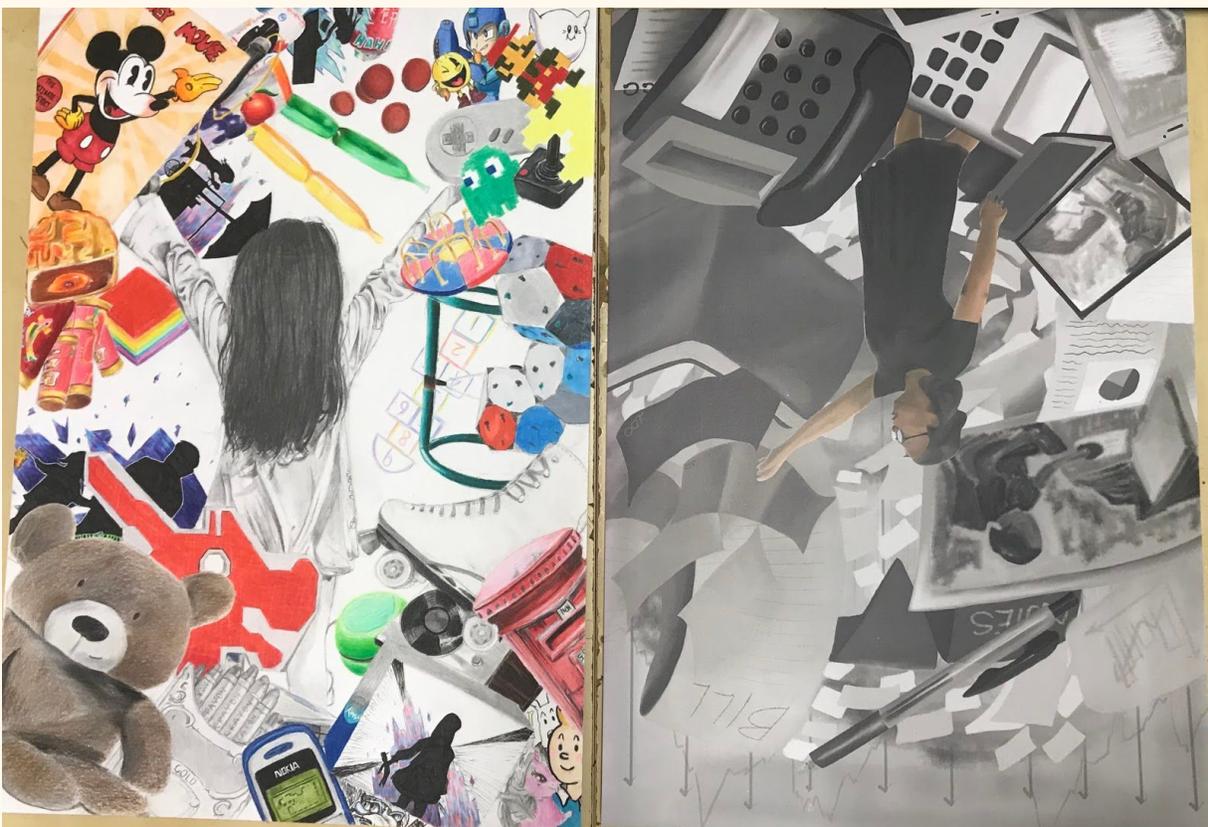
### Human Figure Study



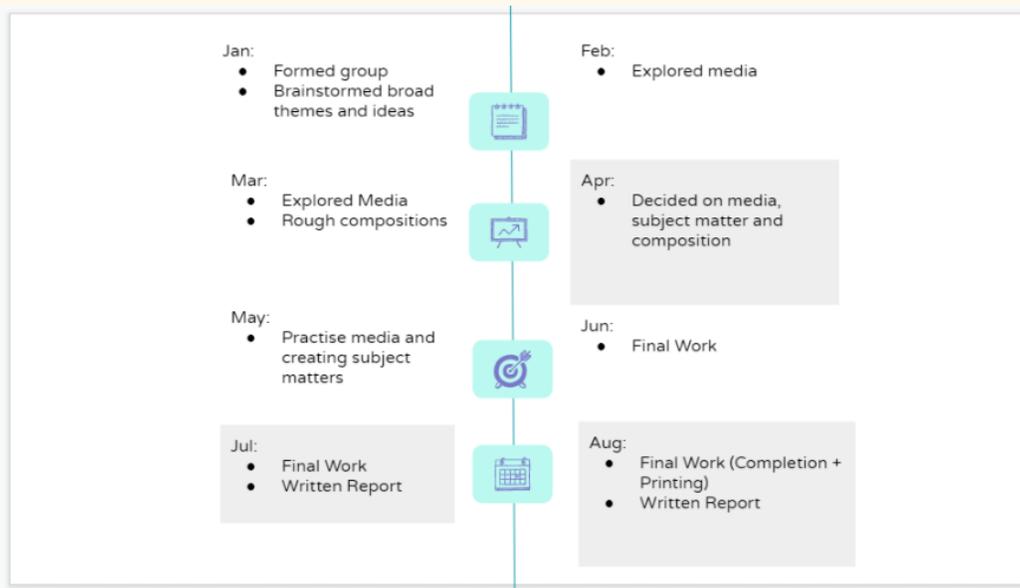
### Subject Matter Study



# FINAL ARTWORK



## TIMELINE



## REFLECTIONS

We learnt proper delegation of work based on each member's strength as we realised the importance of teamwork and communication to ensure we are on task and aligned with one another's progress.

Time management was very important to us as well, as we had to learn to coordinate meetings with one another amongst our busy schedules as well as ensure that we were meeting the deadlines.

We also got to work on our oral presentation skills, delivering an engaging presentation.

However we feel that the most meaningful part of this project is the artmaking process itself as it has given us plenty of takeaways and also allowed us to have fun while gaining a deeper insight into grasping the technical aspects of the media better, effectively conveying our message through the artwork, as well as bringing out the aesthetics of the artwork. The theme selection helped frame and streamline our thoughts throughout the process, and gave us new lenses on matters, so that we can look for areas to explore further in our artwork.

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**The End**