



# Self- Portraiture

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For me, this would be a reflective piece of my life up till now as a teenager, including my 4 years in Hwa Chong. Major themes would revolve around self-love and acceptance.

People tend to see themselves through their own subjective lens. Yet, as humans, it is often extremely difficult to be truly objective and correct when analyzing the self. I tend to amplify a lot of my flaws, like my severe acne and scars, or my underweight body, or my effeminate behaviour, or my unruly curls; and it can take a toll on my well-being when I become overly critical about myself.

This project would help me reclaim insecurities, and be more comfortable in my skin, hopefully also inspiring others to do the same.

**artist's intentions**



# significance of self-portraiture

Portraiture has been used to show the power, importance, virtue, beauty, wealth, taste, learning or other qualities of the sitter. They are also important in helping us document our growth and development as humans.

Since we do not see ourselves the way people see us, painting my self-portraits can portray the nuances that I perceive, and make this work more personal, at the same time offering insights into my life, surroundings, and even state of mind.

At the same time, it allows for artistic freedom for me to explore the boundaries of where I can push myself in terms of my art-making process.

**“You call yourself ugly but you’ve only seen yourself when you look in the mirror. It’s so easy for people to say they’re ugly because they’ve never seen themselves in the smallest moments, in the ordinary, and still be beautiful.”**

# Artist References

# frida kahlo

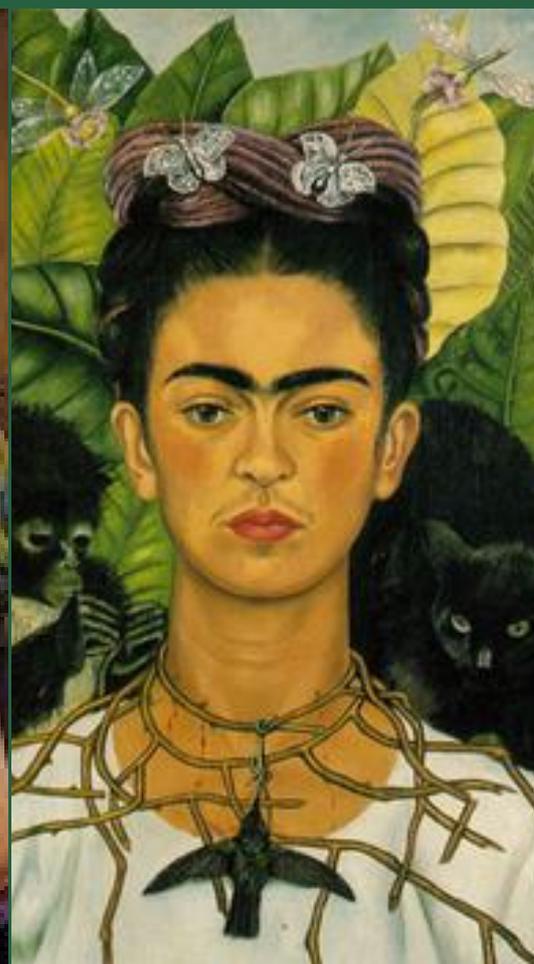
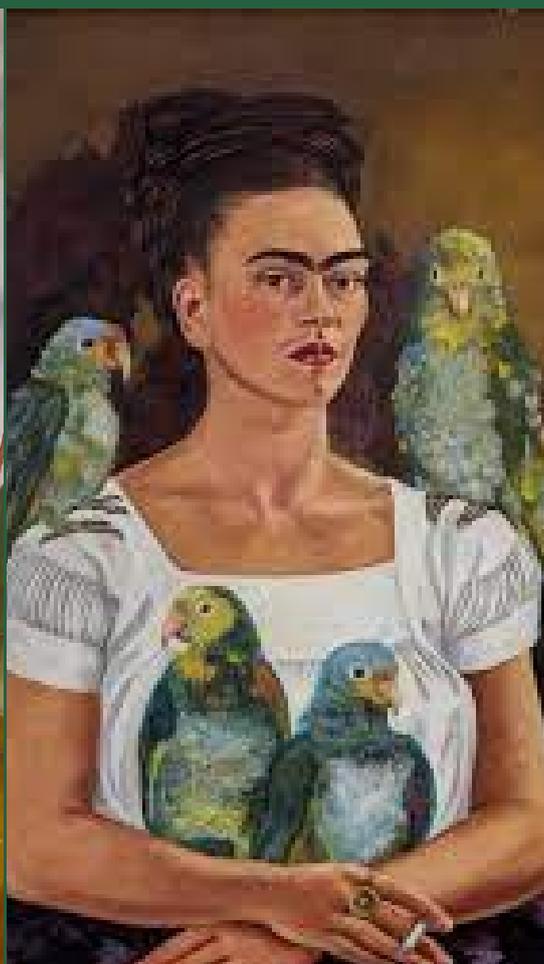
“I paint self-portraits because I am so often alone, because I am the person I know best.”

Frida Kahlo is a pioneer at self-portraits, with 55 self-portraits produced during her career. Kahlo's artwork, particularly her self-portraits, are autobiographical – each one depicting a moment in her life or political issues in her home country of Mexico. In her paintings are symbols and metaphors that reflect on her emotions, her pain and anguish, even her dark humour.



Frida Kahlo is an undeniable inspiration for me in this project. Being a feminist, she valued and celebrated characteristics that patriarchal society has labelled unfeminine and ugly. Also, being openly bisexual, her ideas surrounding sexuality wove themselves into her art in various ways and led her to explore themes of infertility, sexual pleasure and her tumultuous relationship with her husband.

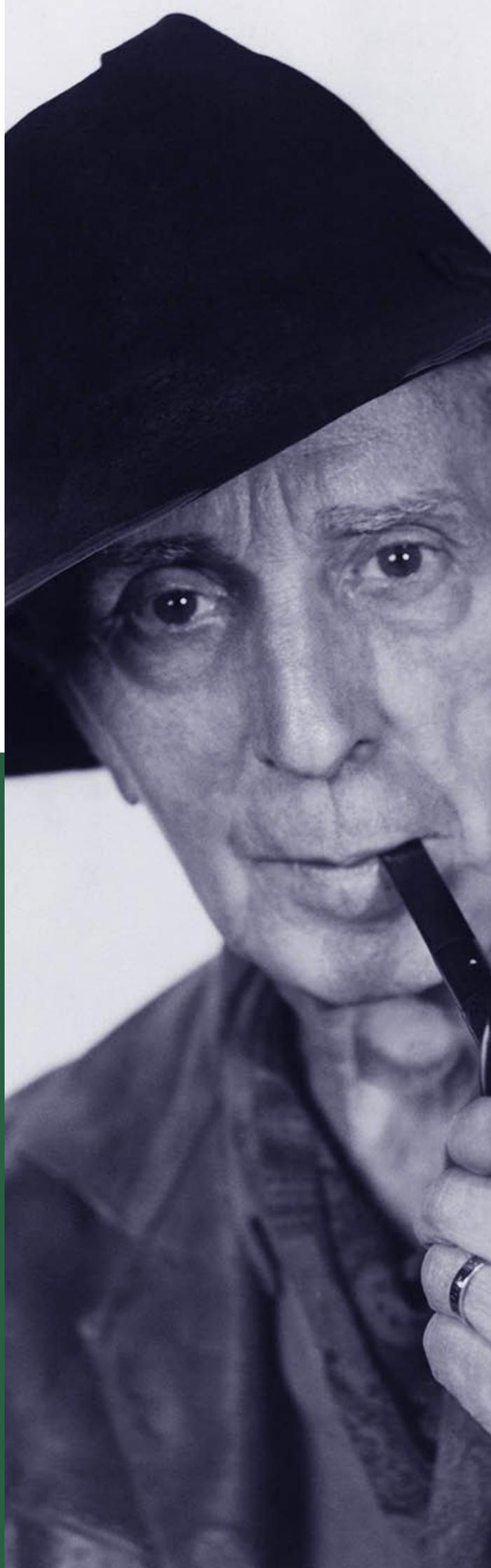
Her daringness to reclaim things that have diminished her inspires me thematically, to not be afraid of what others think of you, and be satisfied with yourself. Artistically, the surrealist way Frida Kahlo juxtaposes symbolism and props in her artwork to bring across her message is something that could be implemented in my piece.



# norman rockwell

“The View of life I communicate in my pictures excludes the sordid and the ugly. I paint life as I would like it to be.”

From the 1960s to the 1980s, Rockwell themes included poverty, civil rights, and space exploration. Illustrating cover illustrations of everyday life for The Saturday Evening Post magazine over nearly five decades, Rockwell’s works have always reflected human conditions of society at a particular time.



This painting is a visual commentary on segregation and the problem of racism in America. Considered an iconic image of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, this painting made me realise that we can continuously draw experiences and challenges we face in our everyday lives and incorporate them into an artwork.

From the control of medium to human proportions, to artistic intentions, Rockwell is an artist that I can draw a lot of inspiration from.

The Problem We All Live With (1964, Oil on canvas)



# Concepts and Compositions



## Concept 1:

The initial concept I came up with was more broad and generic, dealing with ideas of love. They include love for family, friends, activities, and more. Painting portraits of people I love, or have taught me to love myself would help propel this concept.

## Composition 1:

To carry Concept 1 out, the initial idea was to do multiple portraits of people and paint them together in one scene. The portraits of people would be in smaller paintings, while the painting of a scene would be bigger, tying all the portraits together into a more cohesive artwork in general.

## Small paintings:



## Big painting:





## Concept 2:

Concept 2 is going to be about self-love. I will be painting self-portraits, along with subject matter depicting things I love; about myself, about activities, about things. Things would be portrayed in a more grotesque way but in a more celebratory light.

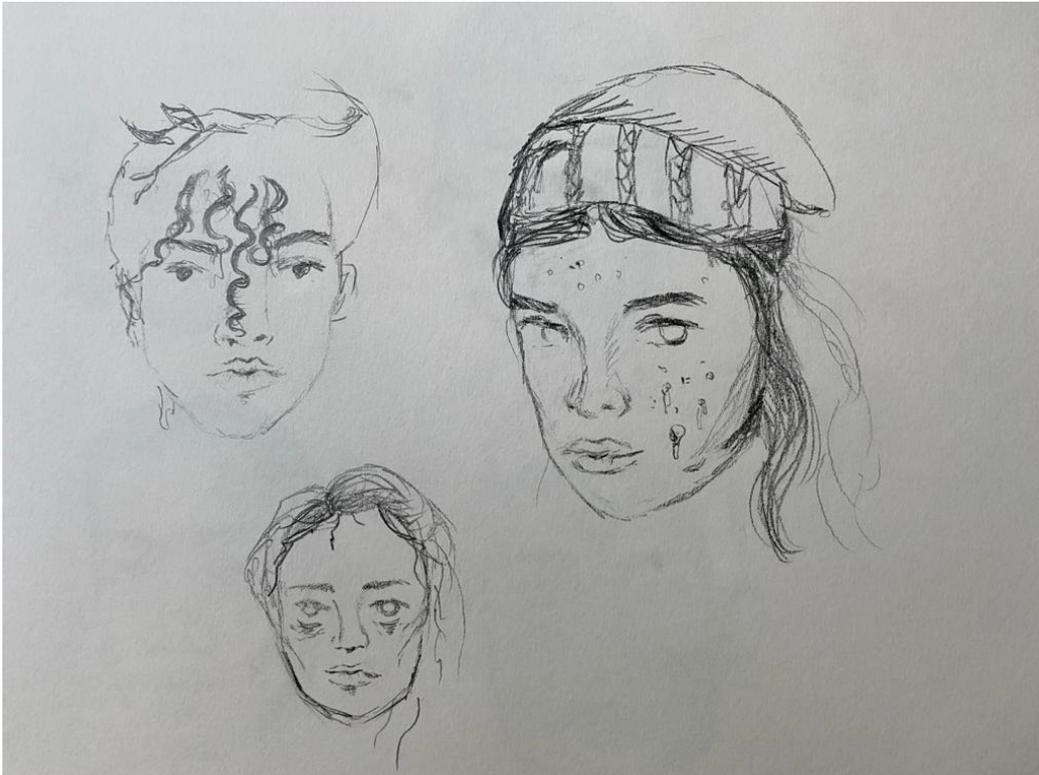
## Composition 2:

Composition 2 would comprise more design techniques and contemporary elements to the work.

## Sketch #1



## Sketch #2

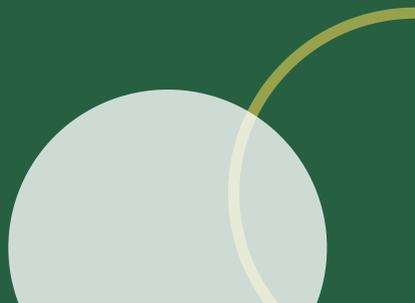




# Finalised Concept and Composition

I felt that Composition 1 is not going to be visually cohesive. With portraits of too many people, it may become confusing and difficult to understand the artist's intention. Also, I found the composition may not be well-planned, as there are paintings of different sizes, making it difficult to arrange. Execution wise, Concept 1 may be harder to carry out as I would have to find reference photos of people and get everyone together.

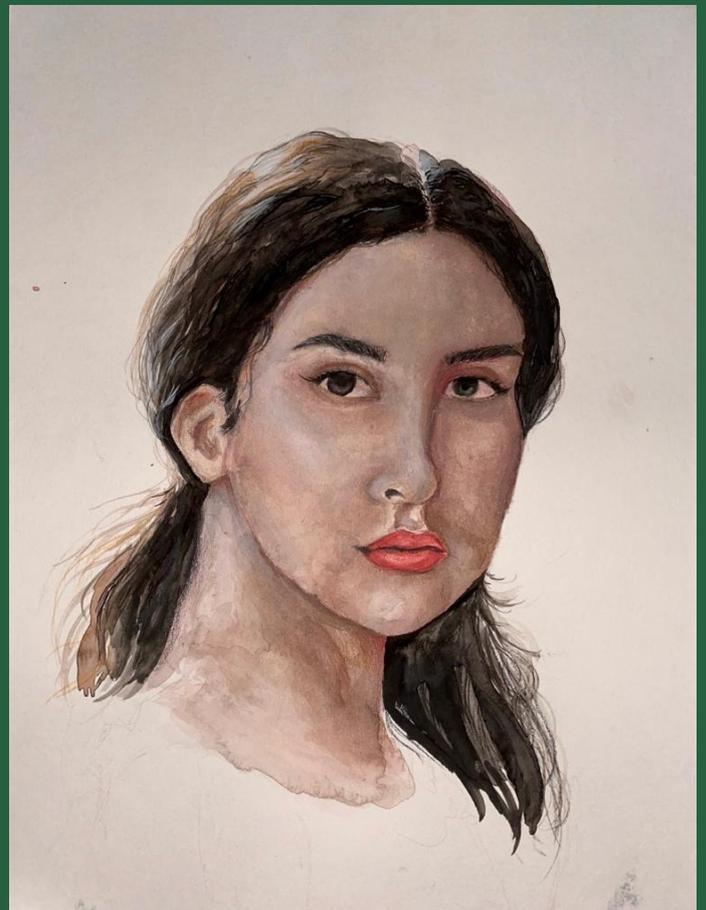
Whereas, Concept 2 is probably more cohesive since there is a single subject matter throughout the paintings. I find that it would also be more convenient to paint, and more meaningful to me personally as a reflective piece.



# **Choice of Medium**

# Watercolour:

Watercolour is a more familiar medium for me, and I have always been interested in this medium. However, one common problem is inaccurate proportions. Proportions tend to change when I layer the paint too much. However, it is a versatile medium that is convenient.



# Oil Paint:

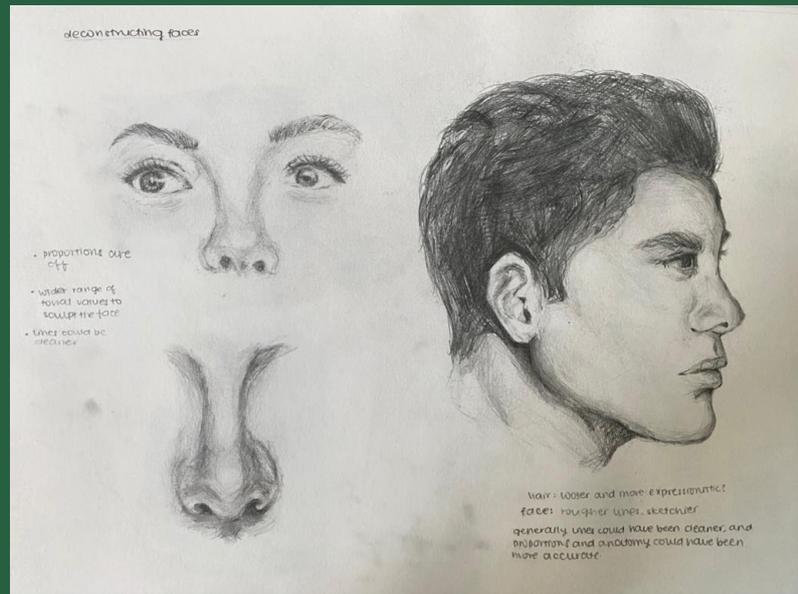
One thing I really like about oil painting is the vibrant colours and ease to blend. The vibrant colours make it easier to differentiate. The ease of blending is advantageous when painting features such as the skin since it provides a smoother blend.

However, I am not that interested in oil paint as a medium. It is also very inconvenient to set up and clean up.



# Pens, Pencils, Colour Pencils:

Pencils and colour pencils do not have the effect I want to achieve as compared to a wet medium. I am also not as proficient in this medium, although it is something I would want to try.



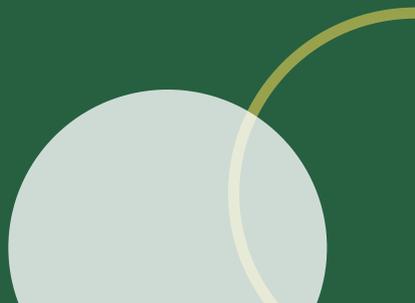
# **Artistic Intentions**



# Creation

The initial style of this artwork was meant to be realism. However, the more I continue with the work, the more I feel like realism does not stimulate me, and I find myself forcing myself into an aesthetic that does not fit my style.

So, I decided to change the style of my work, to a more contemporary style, where there would be more design elements and brighter colours. It would be more visually stimulating and would be equally as effective in relaying the artist's intentions.





## **Failure 1: Lack of visual stimulation**

For my oil paintings, which I intended on aiming for realism, my thoughts did not translate onto paper well. Since I wanted to be doing close-ups of different features, I had to focus a lot on details which are difficult to paint. Due to a lack of proficiency in that medium, some of the details are sacrificed and it results in a painting that has a lower level of verisimilitude and is not as stunning.

## **Failure 2: Ideation**

Concepts and compositions in my opinion were difficult to come up with; especially one that can incorporate design elements skilfully and have it look cohesive as a final piece. I could have also spent more time thinking of better



## Success 1: Rendering colours

The more I paint, the more I start to know what a correct skin tone is supposed to look like. By referencing them against mid-tone paper and other skin tones, and asking people around to check if the colours are accurate has been of really great help.

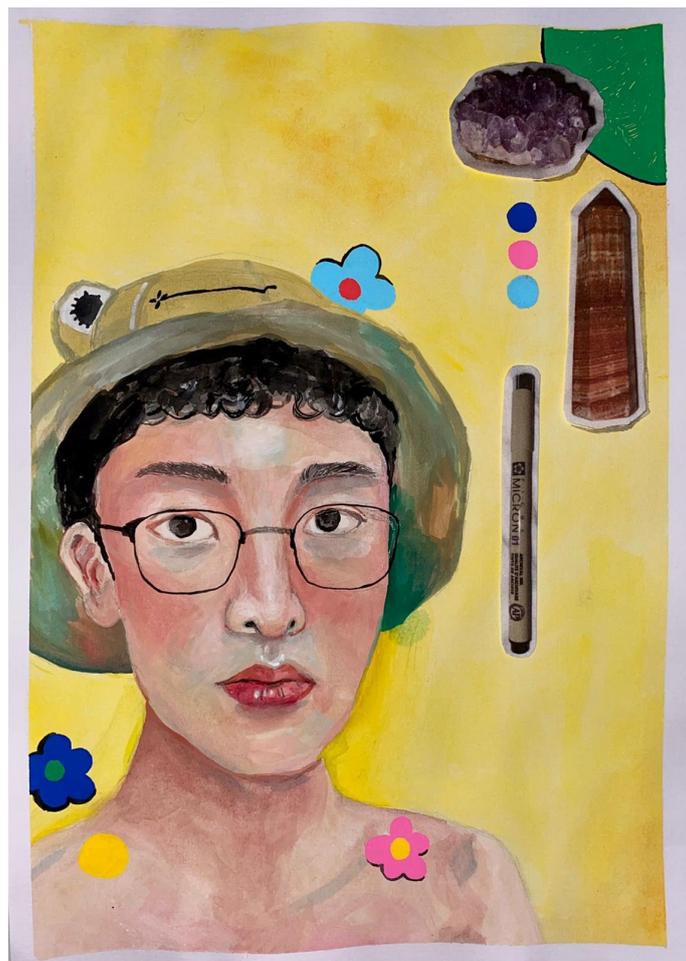
## Success 2: Design

I have gotten better at knowing how and where to place certain elements of the artwork. Instead of haphazardly putting down designs, or painting things on without consideration, I now have more control over the tiny details that I would have missed out on before.



# Final Work

3 A4 pieces





# Reflections

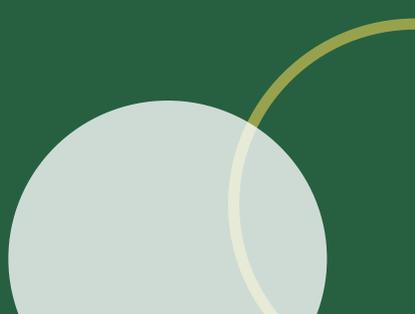
This being my first year doing a Category 5 Creative Arts project has really made me more aware of a systematic approach to art making.

Compared to just drawing what I feel like drawing, the whole process has made me realise what I can do to make a more impactful and thoughtful piece.

Also, since this year was quite a busy year, I feel like I could have spent my time more wisely and set more time aside to work on this project.

Working out some issues like job time management would have saved me a lot of trouble.

Overall, I like how this final work turned out. The art-making process really gave me a platform to express my thoughts and emotions.



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