Theme: Gaining Female Empowerment Through Struggle

Media used:
- Oil paint
- Pencil
- Watercolour
- Lens media (Photography)
- Coloured pencil
- Textile (knitting)

Tajikistan is a third world country that faces issues with gender inequality and discrimination. Unfortunately, women in my country suffer gender discrimination, oppression, and domestic violence that is wrongly justified by religious beliefs. My art, that mirrors the storytelling in Persian literature by structure, intends to influence cultural attitudes, break gender stereotypes and empower women to feel more confident. By creating a storyline, I ensure to lead my viewer through the experience and bring to the resolution where females have gained their rights and are viewed on equal grounds as men.
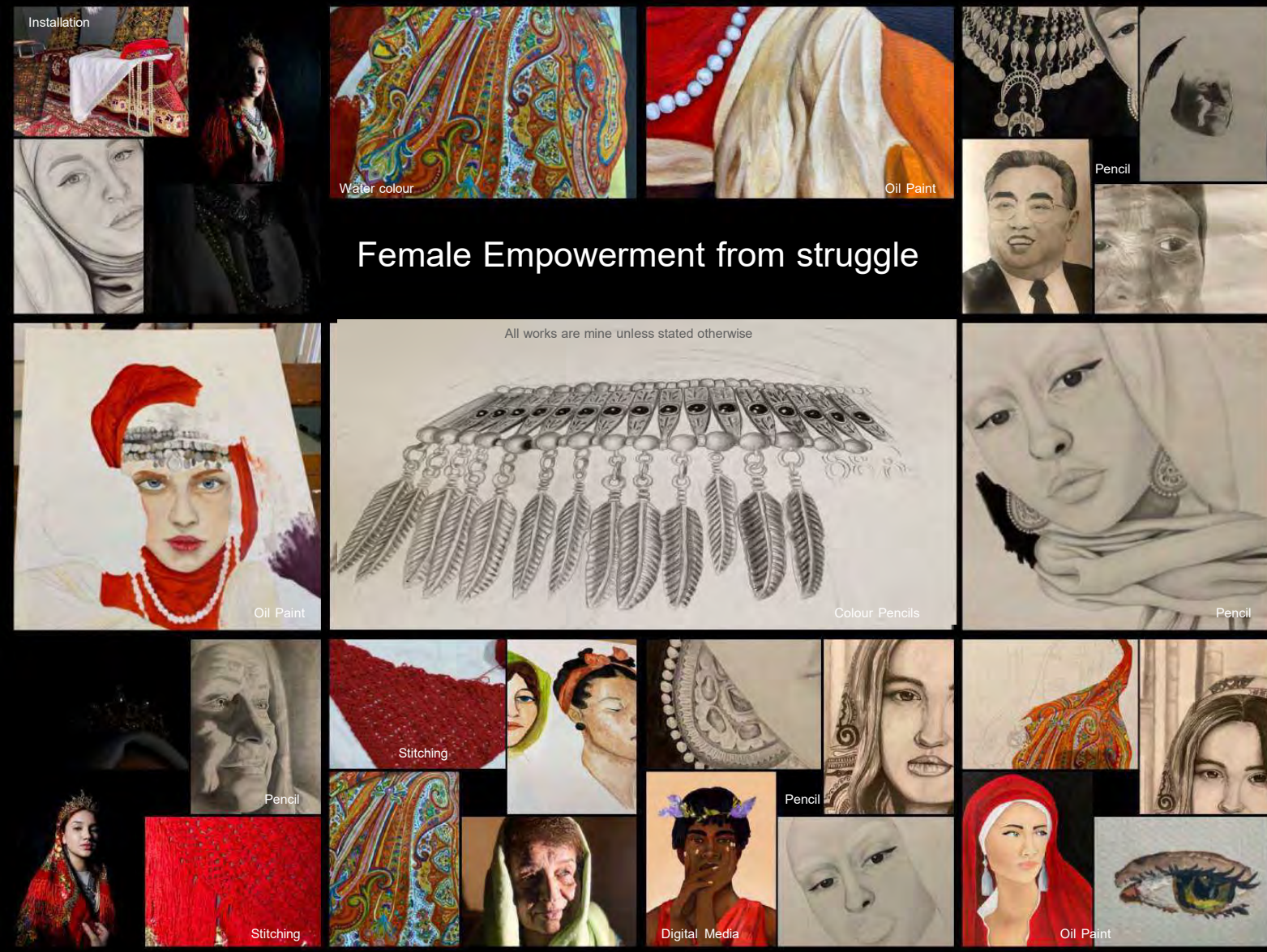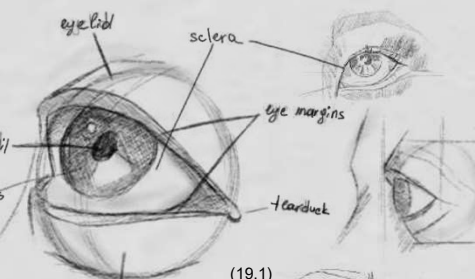
Extended Study of Body Proportions and Anatomy

Making **portraits** requires considerable knowledge about the **human body proportions**, **anatomy** and **structure**. It would be interesting to look into the whole **body anatomy** and study the **movement**, but this study will be purely focused on **facial structure**, **mimics** and **muscle movement**. I began my study from the top - eyes and eyebrow movement. It is essential to understand the movement in order to be able to precisely **capture** the **emotion**. The eye is **composed** of different elements, one of which is the **pupil**. It is important to consider that the **pupil shrinks** due to the intensity of **light**, and **expands** when there is less light. The **iris** is a muscle around the pupil that controls it. The visible part of the eyeball is called **sclera**. The eye itself is one of the most symmetrical parts of the human body, therefore it is okay to make the same base circle for both eyes (19.1). The **orbits** of the eyes in the skull sit back within the **square-like sockets** (box) shown to the right. The box is the key to formation of the eyelids that wrap the eyeball. The

(19.1)

eyebrows are defined from the **base structure** of the face (19.2). The level is determined by **proportions** in the **initial stages** of the composition.

Perspective is also very important to consider for the right proportion. A tilt in head or a gaze away will result in a different composition that requires a new set of skills .
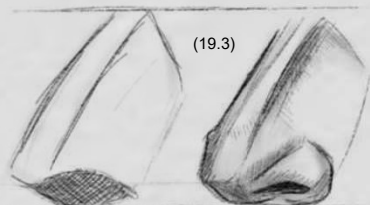
The fold and the eyelid are very defined in Central Asian people.

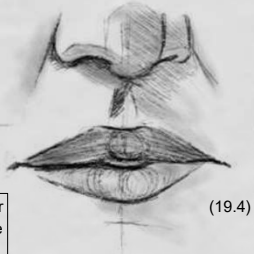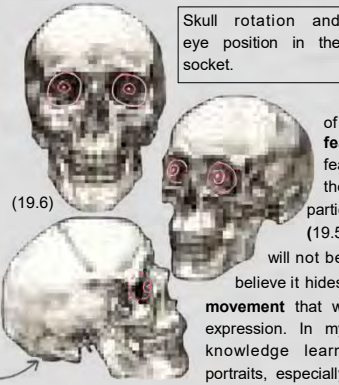The Epicanthic fold is part of the upper eyelid that covers the corner of the eye.

(19.2)

Different eyelids that correspond to different bone and muscle structure.

(19.3)

Plane breakdown of nose - simplified figure to identify direction of lines. It helped me as a base that was later improved with addition of more details, like the nostrils, the wings and the nose bridge.

Three quarter view of the nose

(19.4)

N o s e s d i f f e r b y **g e o g r a p h i c a l** backgrounds - some are m o r e **d e fi n e d** t h a n others. In Central Asia, the nose is very defining The top of the nose is bony, and the bottom is **composed** of tissue and muscle. (19.3)

The nose is connected to the eyes by a **keystone**. It is the part when're the nose and the eyebrows meet. The sides of the nose are bony and are more defined and prominent from the side view. Then the **bridge** of the nose is the key to making a **geographical reference** in **drawing**, as it might **appear** bigger in people from Central Asia.

Skull rotation and eye position in the socket.

(19.6)

Lips are the most **expressive** element of the face, as there is a lot of **muscle** and **bone movement** - the jaw. Lips **curve out** from the face - the **centre line** is pushed forward and when viewed from the bottom or top, the lips **wrap around** the face. From this **perspective**, the **corners** of the mouth are lower than the lips. (19.4)

Considering perspective for nose, eyes, lips and presenting them together in a profile view of a face.
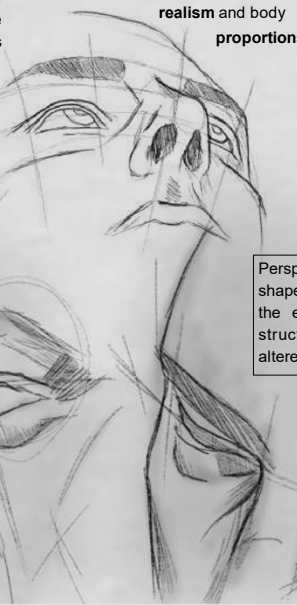
Now that the **prominent** parts of the face have been discussed, it is important to look at the **general movement** of the head - also known as **pose**. **Movement** creates **perspective**, and that changes the **view** of a particular **facial feature**. To identify **perspective**, the head can be simplified into **geometrical shapes** - **cube** and a **sphere** which can establish the **direction** of **implied lines** for the rest of the face. These are sketches of basic face. Instead of drawing the **features**, I draw the lines that identify the features first to serve as **guidelines**. As the head moves, the implied lines bend in particular **directions** to supply **perspective (**19.5). In my **portraits**, the pose will not be extremely **profiling** or **raised**, as I believe it hides **slight variations** in **muscle movement** that will be the key to **capturing** facial expression. In my **portraits**, I will **implement** the knowledge learned from this study in making portraits, especially those of **grand scale**. This study provided insight into facial proportions and expressions. I believe nose was one of the weak areas of mine, but now that I have understood the general **anatomy** and **simplification** of **features** and practiced drawing noses, I believe

it set a strong **foundation** in my future drawing practices. This study helped me to achieve the **realistic effect** by getting to the core of **realism** and body **proportions**
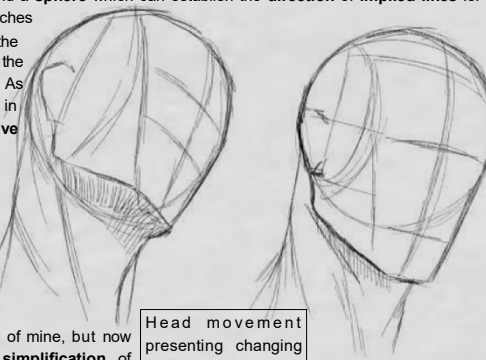
Head movement presenting changing perspective

(19.5)

hairline
eye-level
base of nose
separation of lips
bottom of chin
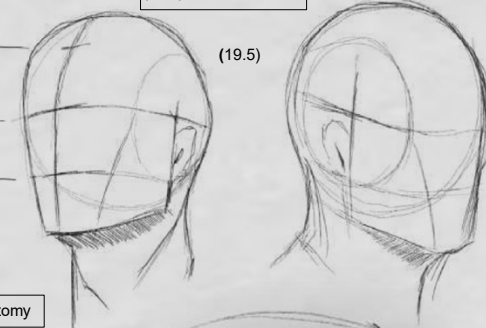
Character anatomy

Perspective changes the shape of the features, like the eyes and nose. The structure, thus, will be altered.

(19.6)

Visiting August Rodin Museum

In autumn I had the privilege of visiting the Rodin Museum in France, Paris. August Rodin was a French **sculptor** of the globally renown **statue** of "The Thinker". The **sculptor** is famous for his ability to **capture drama**, **love** and **suffering** in **clay** and **bronze** by accentuating either on **facial expressions** or the **body language** of the subject. Most of his works are **influenced** by religion, as most of his works belong to a greater **composition** of a **sculpture** with religious **connotation**. I learned a lot about Rodin's **biography**, **influences** on his art and **intentions**. However, I also acquired new skills with this visit. When I attend exhibitions or any art-related events, I like to carry a sketchbook with me to draw and sketch **sculptures** that grab my attention - I capture details and parts that I think are **innovative** and fascinating - those that I could potentially use in my own art. I attended the museum in the daytime, and noticed that there is no **artificial light** present in the room - only a couple of chandeliers for **decoration** purposes. Instead, the museum heavily relied on **natural light** that came form big window panels shown below. I believe such a set up allowed different **views** of sculptures and art throughout

the day due to Earth's revolutions around its axis, as the **amount** of **light**, its **direction** and **intensity** varied. During the daytime, I paid close attention to how light **scatters** over the **sculpture**, thereby giving the eye the ability to **differentiate** a **curved** and a flat **surface**. The way light was located on the sculpture was very interesting to me, as light played a key role in realism. **Realism** is an artistic **movement** that **depicted** the subject closest to a real life **perception**. This is why finding the **source** of **light** was so important in achieving the realistic effect. The sculpture to the right "Saint Jean Baptiste" has caught my attention due to way the **shadows** show **concavities** and **highlights** show **convexities**. It also presented a realistic body due to the **sustained relative proportions** of the human body. The sculpture captured **movement**, and I had to learn how to capture it at least on paper.
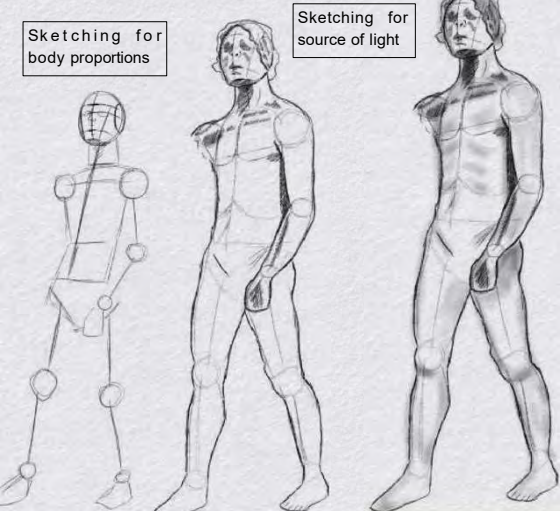
Sketching for body proportions

Sketching for source of light

The museum also had a lot of **bronze sculptures**, but it was hard for me to recognize the **highlights** and **shadows** with a naked eye, therefore I was more drawn to ones that were in **clay** and **plaster** (white). As I learned how to do **value analysis**, I also began to sketch his other sculptures that I believed would be a great practice for my future artworks in **pencil**. "Hands of Rodin and Rose Beuret" was a sculpture bigger than "Saint Jean Baptiste", and I was fascinated by how Rodin managed to **reduce** the size and keep the **proportions realistic**, as well as increasing the **scale** and keeping the right **proportions**. On my sketch pad I could only work with reduced size for practicing purposes.

Some of his **two dimensional** art was at times unfinished, but still **showcased** great **skill**. This painting has no name, and it was done using **oil paints**. Just by looking at it, I can see that the artist used a lot of **shades** in order to achieve the **flesh colour**. Some **highlights** required more **white**, and the **shadows** were distributed using **dark red**. This gives the face a more lively and **realistic colour**. I will definitely **implement** this in my future artworks in **oil** - I will mix different **colours** that might not stand out from the **colour palette**, but have a butterflies contribution to the **overall scheme**.
Typically I do not carry a lot of **supplies** with me, but only my iPad for drawings. It allows me to use various media within one sketchbook. So when I encountered the infamous "The Kiss" I knew I had to capture it in detail using **digital media**. I sat there fore about an hour and a half, trying to capture the **source of light** without using a **monochromatic colour scheme** that I typically had using pencil. I added and mixed different **hues** to achieve the **skin tone** shown below, and I believe I have managed to do it well. Learning from Rodin, I also used **red hues** to **indicate** the **shadows** and added more **yellow ochre** and **titanium white** for showing the **highlights**. I also added some light green shades for a **subtone** of the **skin**.

Value is the key to achieving a realistic effect
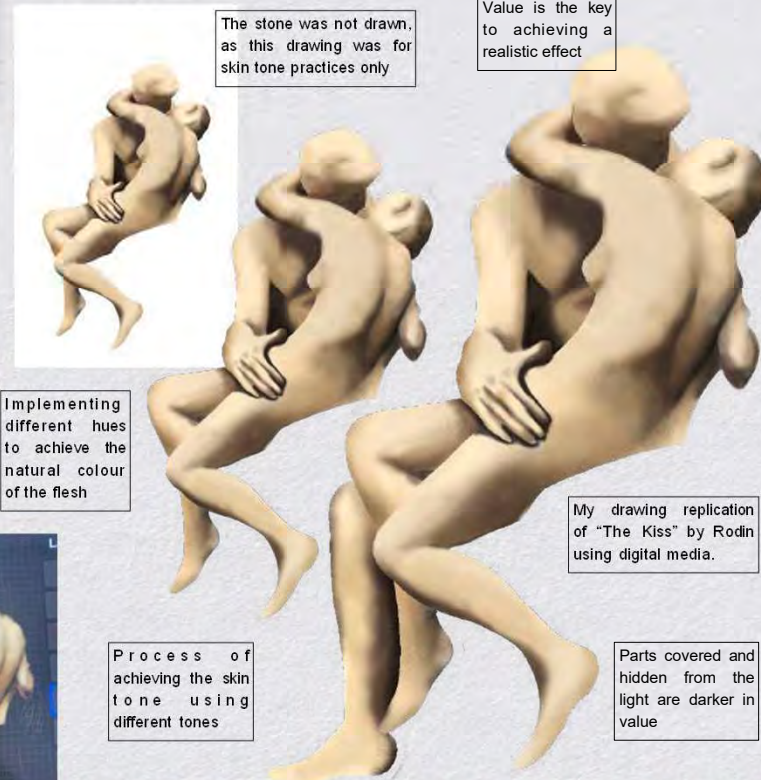
The stone was not drawn, as this drawing was for skin tone practices only

Quick sketch for indication of shadow

Implementing different hues to achieve the natural colour of the flesh

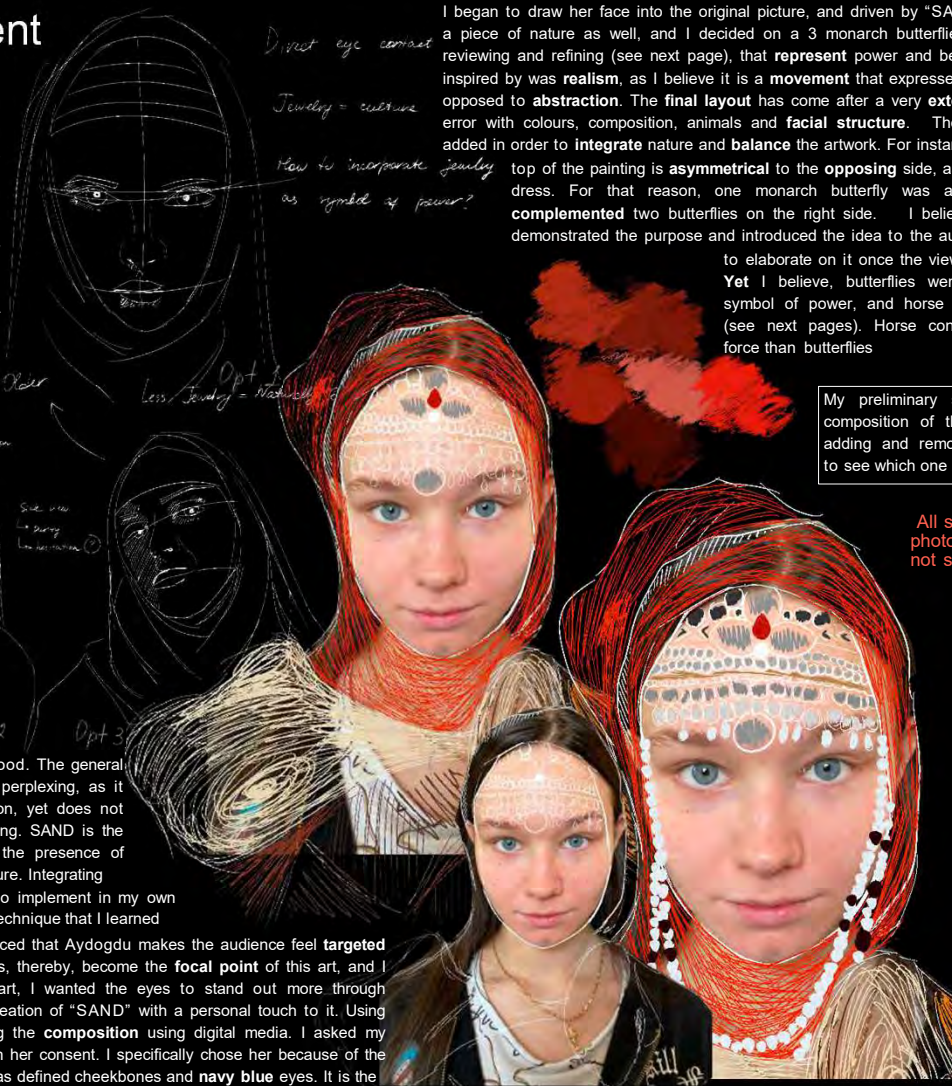My drawing replication of "The Kiss" by Rodin using digital media.

Process of achieving the skin tone using different tones

Parts covered and hidden from the light are darker in value

All photographs and drawings are mine replicating Rodin's works for practicing purposes unless stated otherwise

Idea and Composition Development

Heavily inspired by the **renaissance art** that values every detail striving for realism I decided to depict female empowerment through facial expression and details that serve as an **indication** to my culture. The **purpose** of my **exhibition** is to mirror the process of storytelling and use my **paintings** as elements of the **plot**. Since the writing in Farsi is from right to left, the paintings were also displayed from right to left. My **intention** was to **engage** the audience into the story from its **exposition**. I began with brainstorming on the **pose**, **facial expression** and presence of jewelry. The following sketches showcase different positions that I have explored. I specifically chose sketch number 3 because I believe it **embeds** a **direct eye contact** with the audience, thereby creating the **tension** that I needed for the ultimate effect - maximized **engagement**. Option 1 did not convey as much tension, and was rather implying innocence. Option 2 had elements of **dramatic** illumination, yet the pose did not suggest tension and viewer engagement. However, in order to make specific geographical and historical references, I needed jewelry. I began to search for **inspiration** on the web and found a **contemporary** Turkish artist Aykut Aydogdu, whose works **captured** the connectedness of women to nature. The **realism** in his art is what caught my interest even more, and I found myself very fond of one of his works titled "Sand" (2.1) . As in most of his art, it appears to me that Aydogdu's **core theme** is protection and glorification of females by nature that comes in forms of flora and fauna. Viewing it from a **gender-feminist** lens, the flora and fauna of the artworks, tends to **complement** the the overall **composition**. The **purpose** of including the nature is to protect the female. I am fond of the fact that the artist manages to merge two different **movements** - surrealism and realism together in order to create a complex composition that possesses layers of **metaphorical** meaning. Pealing the **layers** one by one via observing the details in the works resembles pealing the petals of a rose - another universal symbol of beauty. It also came to my attention, that the women portrayed in the majority of his works is the same woman in different phases of her life and mood. The general effect of the works on the viewer is quite perplexing, as it allows a room for thought and interpretation, yet does not give a defined answer and leaves us hanging. SAND is the **artwork** that caught my attention due to the presence of Persian cultural attire and **integration** of nature. Integrating animals in **portraits** sounded new exciting to implement in my own art. Using animals as **symbols** was a clever technique that I learned from this **artwork**, and used in my art. I noticed that Aydogdu makes the audience feel **targeted** and **engaged** via the **eye-contact.** The eyes, thereby, become the **focal point** of this art, and I wanted to recreate that. Yet, in my own art, I wanted the eyes to stand out more through contrast. I **intended** for my art to be a recreation of "SAND" with a personal touch to it. Using the same colour scheme, I began exploring the **composition** using digital media. I asked my friend to pose for the **reference** picture upon her consent. I specifically chose her because of the prominent and defined facial structure, such as defined cheekbones and **navy blue** eyes. It is the eyes that would be the **focal** point of the art due to the **contrast** that such **cool colour** creates with the general warm colour palette and direct eye contact. I removed some **features** from the **original work**, such as the scar because it did not align with the **purpose** of my art - I did not want to **portray** violence. Additionally, I removed the details on the scarf (as they represent Slavic culture) and the wild cats, because I wanted to add more **sophistication** and less **aggression**. I believed a horse would be a great addition to my art (see next page). The sketches can be seen above.

I began to draw her face into the original picture, and driven by "SAND" I wanted to **integrate** a piece of nature as well, and I decided on a 3 monarch butterflies after a long process of reviewing and refining (see next page), that **represent** power and beauty. The **style** that I was inspired by was **realism**, as I believe it is a **movement** that expresses the message **directly**, as opposed to **abstraction**. The **final layout** has come after a very **extensive** process of **trial** and error with colours, composition, animals and **facial structure**. The monarch butterflies were added in order to **integrate** nature and **balance** the artwork. For instance, the scarf on the left top of the painting is **asymmetrical** to the **opposing** side, as well as the sleeves of the dress. For that reason, one monarch butterfly was added on the left, which **complemented** two butterflies on the right side.   I believe such set up effectively demonstrated the purpose and introduced the idea to the audience and then began to elaborate on it once the viewer is engaged in the art. **Yet** I believe, butterflies were a a **relatively weak** symbol of power, and horse would have been better (see next pages). Horse conveyed more power and force than butterflies

My preliminary sketches for the final composition of the artwork. I practiced adding and removing different elements to see which one suits the best.

2.1

Oil Paint

My resolved artwork submitted for marking (60x90cm)

(handwritten notes: Direct eye contact; Jewelry = culture; How to incorporate jewelry as symbol of power?; Older; Less Jewelry = Nakedness; Younger Version? Future Generation; Opt 2; Opt 3)

Critical Investigation of the Artist & Composition Development

Aykut Aydogdu is a Turkish **artist** who was born in Ankara in 1986. Primarily, his works were of **graphic design**, **commercial illustration**s, **posters** and **magazine covers**, however, later his focus switched to **surrealist figurative art** that depicted the dilemmas of our everyday lives. His style is determined by the two outstanding **repeating symbols** - females and nature, as they appear to be part of every work that Aydogu makes. In addition to that, a **monotonous plain background** is used in every work in order to **emphasize** the **focal point.** BLACK (3.1) was published on 10th of April 2021, which is one of his recent works. Generally, it takes the artist 1-3 months to complete one artwork, depending on its **size**, **complexity of composition** and **general message**. In this case, the artwork is in realistic **movement** due to the presence of **organic lines** and **shadows** that create a **3 dimensional view** of the subject. The **focal point** - the eye of the female, is also brought to attention through the **contrast** in **highlights**, **shadows** and the **colour palette**.

A **soft, dull colour scheme** sets a very bland, yet mysterious **atmosphere**. This is due to the **composition** of the subjects present in the artwork. The **peculiarity** of the image is in the eye of the female, as this is the only **eye-contact** made with the viewer; the dogs are looking away from the **audience** and surround the female as if trying to protect her from something, even covering one of the eyes. Dogs are **symbols** of loyalty and protection, therefore this conveys female power that is being protected by nature. It might also appear that the woman's eye was replaced with , ISLAND (3.2) published on 3d of May 2019

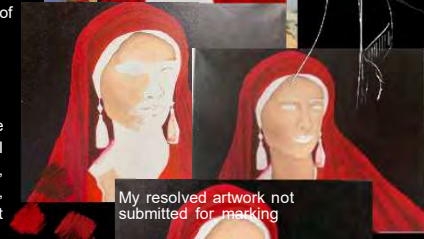became one of his most renown works.

3.5

3.1

3.2

3.4

3.3
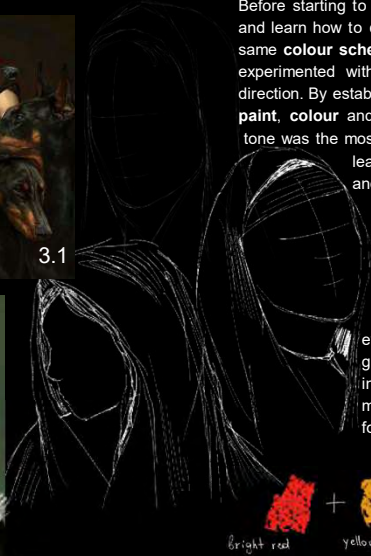
Before starting to work on the final piece, I wanted to **practice** using **oil** and learn how to **distribute highlights** and **shadows** correctly. I used the same **colour scheme** and began with the scarf and the **folds**. I have also experimented with different **textures** to feel the brushstrokes and its direction. By establishing a similar **colour scheme**, I knew the amount of **paint**, **colour** and **shade** needed for the specific feature. The skin tone was the most challenging part of all, and through practice I learned how to mix specific **hues** to achieve the value and the hue that resembles the reference picture the most. Mixing **tones** was essential to achieve the liveliness int he skin and make it look **fresh**. I believe there is no **standard formula** for flesh, because it is **unique**. I began with red, yellow, white and blue tones. Those were the most essential tones, for their mixture could produce every other colour. I mixed the **yellow ochre** with **bright red** to get **orange** and added some **marine blue** to it, which resulted in a **brown-like** colour. Finally, I added a bit of white which gave me the ultimate flesh tint that served as the base. My formula for this specific skin tone base can be found below:
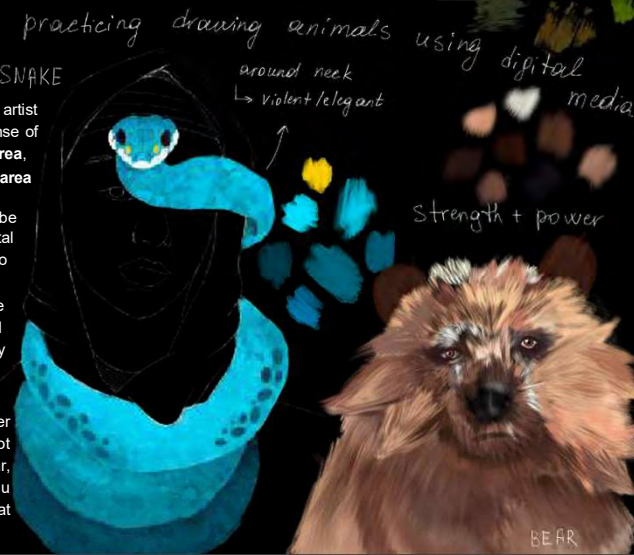
My **resolved artwork** not submitted for marking

result   result

Bright red   yellow ochre   marine blue   titanium white   skintone / flesh base

The **movement** remains **surrealistic** due to the **bizarre assemblage** of ordinary objects, like hair and ocean **waves**. Again, the profound figures of the artwork are: female and nature. In this case, nature acts as water **rather** than animals (from the previous works). Resembling the core **theme** of his works, nature (ocean waves) attempt to protect the woman from the outside world full of danger and mistreatment. In this case, there is no eye contact made with the **audience**. Eyes are essential in **communication** of ideas, as this is how the artist establishes **intent** and **interacts** with the audience. "ISLAND" aims to disregard the **audience** and create a sense of complete **isolation** from the outside world. The **plain background** also creates emphasis on the dominant **area**, which is mainly created by **contrast** of **umber brown**, **fern green** and **pearl white** and attracts the eye to that **area** first.

Additionally, I knew that for my composition, practicing drawing an animal would be necessary, therefore I experimented with different **colour schemes** and animals using digital media. I learned how to achieve the right **texture** for a specific animal, how to use **value** to make an **illusion** of **depth** and how to **complement colours**. First option was to depict a snake. It looked very appealing to me and the blue was chosen specifically to **complement** the eyes and **contrast** with the **warm colour scheme**, but I did not choose it because it implied some **degree** of violence. The **composition** that I came up with depicts a woman nearly suffocating from the snake. If that was the final **composition**, I needed to change my **intended message** from **authority figure** to a vulnerable one, and that did not support my **intent**.

I have also considered a leopard, a dove or a fox, as they were **symbols** of freedom, power and strength. They also worked well with the general **colour scheme**, but the space did not allow inclusion of these animals, and I had to consider other options. I thought of a bear, because bear represents strength, protection and courage - the **message** that Aydogdu conveys in his art as well. However, the bear did not **represent** beauty and abundance that was so necessary for my work. I continued searching for other options.

practicing drawing animals using digital media

SNAKE
around neck
→ violent/elegant

Strength + power

BEAR

Process, Reviewing and Refining

This artwork has gone through a lot of stages of **refining** in order to get to its **finale**, as I have made quite a large number of **changes** during the process. For instance, the initial idea of the **composition** was depicting a female with a **chestnut horse**, because: a) horse **symbolizes** power and beauty; b) chestnut horse would **complete** the **warm colour palette** that was chosen for the artwork, which would **appear contrasting** with the cool **navy blue** from the eyes, thereby imposing greater **emphasis**; c) the horse would have **balanced** the **space**. I have already made preliminary sketches of how the final composition would look like with horses, which can be seen to the right. Option 1, 2 and 3 differed only by the proximity of the horses to the woman. Slight changes possessed different connotations to it, which is why it was important for me to consider all possibilities and maximize accuracy. The reason why I could not get a horse to be part of the painting is because I did not leave enough space for it. I have realized that only after I have fully painted the face, which was quite disappointing, yet not impossible to find a way around it. I started to brainstorm on other animals that **represented** power and beauty, and those that might fit in the space I have left. Previously I thought of different animals to accompany the woman in my art, and none of them fulfilled my intention. I brainstormed on animals that might represent beauty only, and I thought of butterflies. Since the butterflies are not big in size, I could fit a couple of them around, but now it was essential to decide on the colour scheme. The choice was either blue butterflies (to complement the eyes and complete the cool colour palette) or orange butterflies that

would lead for the eyes to be the focal point. Later, I have discovered that the orange butterflies were called 'monarch butterflies' and were named after King William III (4.1), thereby not only **conveying** beauty, but power. The monarch butterflies also

complemented the **warm colour scheme**, while the **blue** would have taken the **emphasis** away from the eyes. The monarch butterflies were of the same **colour** as the cloth. Another challenging part was the pearls, as it took a while for me to paint them (due to lack of experience with oil). This was my first time using **oil paint** as **medium**, and therefore I adopted the same **technique** of **observing** and **applying shadows** as I did with **pencil drawing**, and my I wanted my **brushstrokes** to be very **mild** and **unnoticeable**, thereby achieving **realistic effect.** Each pearl was done using a variety of hues, such

as **maya blue**, **lavender** and **peach yellow**, while the **shadows** were placed using **steel grey**. Eyes have also been **modified** for **emphasis**. Previously, the eyes were rather grey, and seemed unnoticeable. I wanted to make the eyes stand out more, and for that reason I added more navy to the eyes to make the colour more saturated, and it worked.

Opt 2

Opt 1

Opt 3

The facial structure has undergone major changes due to **experimentations** with **artistic movement**. Since the **medium** is oil paint, I thought that it would be safe to experiment with using **rough brushstrokes** for the face, and see if it would integrate better within the composition. However, that was a poor decision, and I could not get back to the **initial facial structure** that I had. I believe it downgraded the artwork a little. Additionally, there were too many **layers** on the **artwork** and the **canvas** began to crack. I could not continue to **modify** the **facial structure**, therefore I decided to leave it as it is. I continued with the **jewelry** on the head, and I believe it also has a lot of room for improvement. If more time was given, I would

have added more details and would have added more **shadows** in order to make it more **realistic**. I admit that I was very slow with this artwork due to lack of experience with **oil**, and the trial and error only **decelerated** the **process**. However, I believe that the **skin tone** has improved, as it is more **vibrant** and **lively**. Overall, if I was to do this artwork again, I would not have experimented with the **style**, and would have left the face and eyes as they are. This artwork has a lot of work for improvement, yet I believe the artwork is successful because it has achieved its **primary purpose** - to **empower** and **inspire**, despite the fact that the look did not turn out as I wanted. The **main purpose** of my art is to **praise females** in my culture, by attaching a sense of power, strength and authority to them, **concepts** that are strongly associated with the men. Tajikistan faces major issues with **gender discrimination** and I wanted to **break** the **stereotypes** that are imposed on women to feel **submissive** and **weak**. Through my art I intended to make a **silent protest**

and thereby making women feel powerful and give them the potential to be in control of their own lives. The key to achieving that was to **depict** women in **omnipotent light** and **implicitly** give them authority that they were **deprived** of before. I enjoyed working on this art, because it was my first time making a big oil painting, which was exciting. I learned how to use oil, how to control the consistency of the paint. I learned that for lighter intensity, it is necessary to add linseed oil and

when a more saturated due is required, remove any excess oil from the paint. I also realized that oil paint gives a lot of flexibility because mistakes can be corrected in a certain period of time, when the surface covered with paint dries off. This luxury is unfortunately not present in pencil drawing or other media. I grew to like oil paints and became more interested in learning more about it. I also

learned how to mix paints for flesh tone, and my future portraits will be better in skin tone all thanks to this artwork. I will use the skills I learned from this work in my next oil paintings and learn how to manipulate various hues to get the exact colour that is required.. I have made a lot of mistakes in this work that turned into a learning opportunity for future artworks using oil paints.

Composition Development and Inspiration Source

5.1

5.2

I am a big admirer of **Renaissance art** and as I was thinking about ways to use the **space**, I was very inspired by Da Vinci's art that embodied **triangular composition**, such as *Madonna of the Rocks* (5.1) and *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* (5.2). The arrangement of the elements provided **inner balance** and **structural unity**, thereby elevating the art towards **harmony**. I believe such structure achieves a 'mathematical harmony' which allows the **naturalism** and **organic state** to work together with a **formal geometric layout**. I wanted to use the **space** effectively, and a **triangular composition** developed by Da Vinci allowed me to achieve inner harmony. Yet, I decided to reverse the **composition**, thereby having an **implied reverse triangle** formed. This allows me to put the **central figure** - youth in the foreground, while those from a past generation remain behind. However, the exact position was finally determined after experimentation with composition. Option 1 shows a lot of proximity between the women, and the older generation is way behind the youth. I believe such a set up was not exactly what I wanted as it looked awkward and I thought perhaps more proximity would look better. Option 2 is the sketch with more proximity which sets a family-like atmosphere and conveys warmth. I rather wanted something serious and more to the point. Thus, Option 3 reduced the proximity and guaranteed seriousness.

Once I had an idea of what I wanted my art to look like, I have asked my mother and sister to take pictures, and took my own. Then I have put a black and white filter on to facilitate the recognition of **source** of **light** and analysis of value. I have chosen myself to model for my art, because I have never made a **self-portrait**, and throughout the process I, in fact, learnt more about my **facial structure**. I noticed a lot of details that I have not noticed in 18 years of my life. The **facial expressions** were deliberately chosen to be serious, for I wanted my message to have a strong impact. For even greater effect, I chose the biggest **size** paper that was in stock at the art store (90x160cm), because I know that grand **scale** can **impose** a view and impress. A big artwork also changes the viewer's **response** - when the artwork is bigger the viewer is humbled by the power and influence. During the exhibition, I have strategically located the art above the eye-level to establish dominance and authority within the art. I wanted the art to **display** my cultural heritage and for that I added the the jewelry which also **added details to** my work. The choice of jewelry is also **strategic**, because the big necklace symbolizes strength and power. This type of jewelry was worn by women in Pamir and the **geometric shapes created symmetry.** The disks symbolize the sun and the crescent **symbolizes** the moon, hence **enriching** the art with **symbolism**.

Opt 3

5.3

final composition more serious subtext

Opt 2

Opt 1

my preliminary sketches of position for the final composition

composed of organic shapes and lines

My sketches on position of the headscarf and specific jewelry.

My replication of the ancient historical jewelry piece worn in the 13th century by the royalty in Persia (5.3)

Jewelry adds sophistication and complexity. Also a symbol of abundance, power and wealth.

too simple?

└ balance + harmony

I changed some elements of the necklace, thereby adding my voice to it.

precious stones

changed

precious stones

Another aspect that I wanted to touch on with my art is the connection between oppression and religion. I was in a search for the **origins** of **inequality** - when did it begin? Was there a specific event that lead to this? According to a European Journal of Archaeology, gender **inequality** arose approximately 8000 years ago from collective survival in the society, which led to the formation of **stereotypes** and **gender roles**, that was then further strengthened with the creation of religion (5.4). Misinterpretation often leads to conflict and oppression, which is the case with gender inequality. Often, Islam is associated with female oppression and gender inequality, however, the **association** is false. Even more often, majority of men in my country justify their behaviour with religious beliefs, misinterpreted religious beliefs. Islam is, in fact, the first religion that intended to defeat gender inequality and provide equal rights. **Oppression** is not religious, it is cultural. This happens when culture entwines with religion. For this reason, I am **depicting** women in religious attire and jewelry that has a **religious connotation** in the **dominant area** of the artwork. It is a small, but **impactful** way to **implicitly communicate** the idea. The necklace is a word in Arabic that says Allah - God.

While the necklace serves is allusive to religion, the earrings are the heavy necklace serve as a reference to my culture. Since the work was of big scale, I had to add more details on the jewelry for it to stand out. Majority of my jewelry was inspired by the ancient Persian jewelry now found in museums, and were changed according to the current needs. Portraying the youth with historical jewelry shows that a part of cultural heritage always remains despite the difficulties
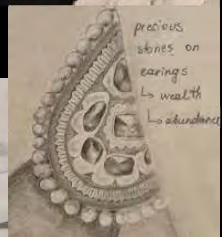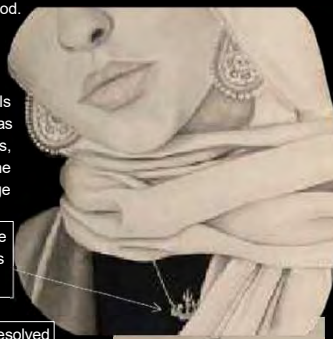
Necklace with religious connotation

Close-up of resolved work - details on the jewelry

precious stones on earrings
└ wealth
└ abundance
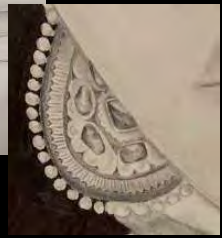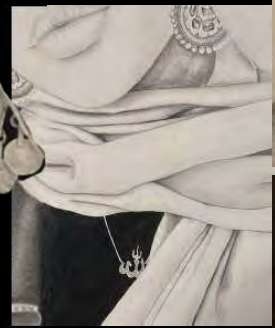
Precious stones on the earrings are emeralds and rubies that are found in abundance in Pamir mountains where I am from (5.5)

Composition Development

Impact was the **primary purpose** of my art, and for that I required **dramatization**. Throughout my Art experience, I realized that I feel the most comfortable in **pencil drawings**, nevertheless, even drawing with pencil was exploring new **medium** for me. I

My resolved artwork not submitted for marking

have previously completed one artwork of **grand scale** with pencil using the **grid method**. It allowed me to gain the skills. I began the process of **percolation** by **cropping** the pictures of my mother, sister and myself and **manipulating space** in order to achieve unity following an upside **pyramidal composition**. Yet before starting any artwork, especially when it is a portrait, I ensure to practice drawing different elements of it (specifically the face) in order to be more accurate with proportions. I have practices drawing the lips from the pictures that I obtained from my family, and have made some other shapes to accurately depict any shape and follow the proportions. This would make it easier to then achieve the right texture. Once the practice was done, I needed to
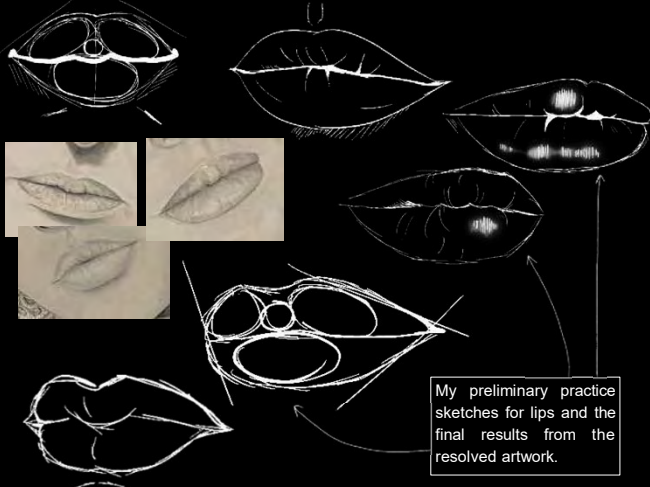
My preliminary practice sketches for lips and the final results from the resolved artwork.

decide on the colour of the headscarf and jewelry. The choice of **colour**, however, was quite limited and I decided to use the **essential shades** of the **greyscale - white**, **grey** and **black**. Majority of my art is covered with **layers of metaphorical meaning**, as I want every choice of mine to have significance in the general message: I chose to use black for my mother, as black **symbolizes** strength and power. These are the qualities I see an older woman have. White symbolizes purity, therefore it had to belong to the youngest member - me, and grey was attributed to the middle of the two. Then I decided to use specific jewelry in order to give more sense of my culture and **elevate** the artwork in terms of **effect** and **impact** and make it stand out to the viewer. The **style**, or rather the **art movement** that I follow is **realism** which is characterized by depicting a subject photographically and realistically. Finally, I have decided on the colour palette, use of space and medium. I began with **sketching** the lines that served as the **blueprint** of the final artwork. For this artwork I used 2B and 8B pencils, electric eraser and blending tools. The blending tools allowed me to **smoothen** the **roughness** of pencil strokes. Doing the skin first was done in order to establish the lightest **value**. Lips required a lot of **shadows** followed by **highlights**, and I used an electric eraser to add 'crunchiness'.

Practicing eyebrows using the scheme above

I struggled with hair even in my previous pencil sketches, and I practiced drawing **eyebrows** and eyelashes on my iPad, as it had more **flexibility** than paper. I watched videos and read **articles** on the **direction** of hair, its following path and etc. This is how I realized that to draw an eyebrow, it is necessary to use different pencils for different layers. At first, I take the HB pencil to draw the shape of the eyebrow and the base layer of hair. Then, I take a **blending tool** and **blur** the base for tint in the eyebrow. This process is repeated 3-4 times, while the **degree** of **darkness** of the **pencil** increased from HB to 5B. I also **used** an electric eraser for highlights on the **eye**brows. Next, I proceeded to the **eyes** and exploring different eye-**shapes**. **Similar** to the eyebrows, eyelashes was **also** a challenge, as I struggled to find **the** right **direction** of the hair and its **origin**. The eyeball, on the contrary, **was** surprisingly easier to portray realistically due to my former experience with pencil drawing. I used the blending tool for the tint in the iris, and then proceeded with a 6B pencil to establish the direction of lines. Then an electric eraser was used for bleaks.

Reflection

Through this artwork I learned a lot about turning a **conceptual idea** into reality, **technical skills** using pencil as a media and a bit more about the origins of oppression. To understand how to **portray** the global issue the best, I had to understand it and view it from various **perspectives** to **eliminate** my personal **bias**. A new **perspective** that was introduced in this work is **religion**. I learned more about how religion is prone to misinterpretation and conflict, which seems almost inevitable. When I conducted more research, I immediately had an idea on how to portray it in my art. By understanding the connection, I was able to turn a **conceptual** idea into reality through cultural and religious attire. As per technical skills, I acquired more experience and **innovative techniques** and tools, such as an electric eraser that I have never heard of before. In my previous pencil art, all I used was pencils and **blending tools**. I believe additional tools allowed me to **advance** my skills, and achieve a more **realistic effect**. In my future art, I will definitely implement the electric eraser and the blending tools to achieve the right **texture**. I believe these tools are more than sufficient for pencil drawings. Additionally I have enhanced my **observational skills**, as I had to draw from looking at the reference picture and establishing the highlights and shadows using the tools. Nevertheless, I believe this artwork has a lot of room for improvement: if I was to do this again, I would pick my grandmother instead of my sister, in order to show a wider **range** of impact, and that would also allow to achieve greater amount of **details** due to wrinkly skin. Secondly, I could not tell the difference between soft and hard pencils visually, and bought a hard pencil, which resulted in harder **blending** and therefore **roughness** (which can be seen on my sister). The skills that I have gained in this work will be **implemented** in my grand finale work, which is the **resolution** of this **storyline**. Also, for my future artworks, I believe it would be a good habit to make **preliminary sketches** of some parts of the final composition to sustain the proportions
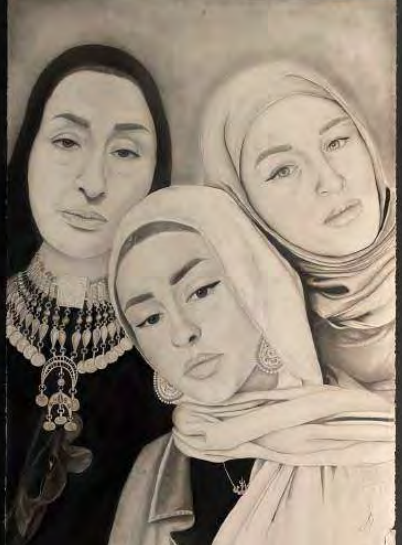
My resolved artwork submitted for marking (90x160cm)

Watercolour, pencil and photography

Initially, this was thought to be a work of lens-media: photography. I have taken my sister's picture upon her consent as a piece for submission. Yet, a moment later I was so inspired by the details on the scarf that I wanted to paint it. I feel most comfortable using pencil as a media, however, I wanted to challenge myself and used watercolour. This would allow me to capture the vibrant hues present in the photograph and the details. I was limited in supplies, as I only had **cake pans watercolour** and one thin **brush**. The paper size was A3, thus it was extra challenging to put the details in. I started with a sketch using **grid method**, and then drew the details from **observation** from the reference picture. I have drawn every detail of the scarf to facilitate the colouring process.
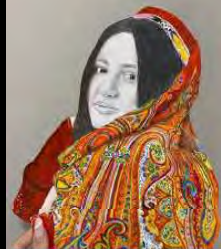
Once the outlines were set in place, I was able to colour it in using watercolour. I needed to be careful, as the details were small for the brush I had. I used less water to increase the intensity of the colour, for I needed the colours to be bright and saturated. Once the clothes were done, I have started to work on the **background** and left the face unfinished. This was because I planned to use pencil for the face, as it would establish a **monochromatic colour scheme** that would not detract from the vibrancy below. The background, however, turned out **poorly** due to a mistake I made - I added too much water. I figured that there was no way back and I had to change the background.

So I cut out the finished part and stick it onto a photograph that I took previously. This represents its uniqueness and **multifacetedness**. This work feels close to my heart, because of the personal **connection** that I share with this artwork.

Before starting to work on my piece, I wanted to practice using **watercolour** in skin **tone**. I wanted to try different skin tones, in order to understand better where the **shades** and the **highlights** fall. This would make the work more **realistic** - which was my It was important for me to understand how the **hue saturation** changes with addition of water. Just like with oil, I had to mix different hues in order to achieve the desired tint. Only, in this case I had to be very quick about it, as it takes less time to dry, thereby giving less flexibility. The practice drawings allowed me to develop my skills, yet it was not the result that I was looking for, as it did not appear realistic due to the visibility of the strokes Therefore, I decided to use pencil for the face in order to guarantee a good result.

Resolved art **submitted** for marking

Background = picture that I have taken before. I printed the photographs and sticked the drawing on top.

background picture

Reviewing, Refining and Reflecting

"Revive" is the smallest (40x60cm), yet the calmest **artwork** in the exhibition, as it offers a place for the **audience** to admire the culture and get away from the issues. It's **purpose** is to offer a place of **comfort**. The art successfully achieved its **purpose**, which is why I think it deserved to be displayed in the exhibition. The amount of **details** on the scarf is the **focal point** of the art, I believe it is my affection that supplies peace and tranquility to the art. This artwork was a learning **experience** for me, as I acquired new skills using **watercolour** paints, such as mixing different **hues**, applying more water for **reducing** the **intensity** of the **colour**, or reducing the amount of water to increase the **saturation**. I also practiced my **observational skills** a lot while **replicating** my **photograph** using the grid method. And even though I did not get to use watercolour for the face, I still practiced and learnt ways of **manipulations** colour and amount of water to achieve the right **texture**.

I think the **size** helped achieve the **purpose** rather that become an obstacle, as even **miniature art** can have grand impact due to the amount of details present in on it. However, if I was to do this artwork again, I would have done the scarf using **coloured pencils**. While I was in the process of drawing the scarf, I forgot to add the shadow on the place where the fold is formed, and instead of adding shadow to individual detail and fold on the scarf, I went over it with one **brushstroke**. This was a poor decision, as it resulted in a dark blurry spot on the back. I tried to fix it by taking the water off of the spot by absorbing it with a tissue and dry brush. I then went over it again with little water, which meant more concentrated colour. The spot is still there, and if I was to do this artwork again I would keep the brush relatively dry at all times, and buy a thinner brush.

The skills that I learned using watercolour in this painting will definitely be used in my future works, as now I know my mistakes and will not repeat them again.

Persian Mosque Tiles Investigation and Inspiration

Since my early childhood, my family and I would go to the mosque and I would be absolutely fascinated by the **architecture** and the **details** of the **mosaic**. The **traditional multicoloured ornament** (typically in **blue tints**) coats the walls and the ceiling of the mosque. It is the details of the **turquoise pattern** of **geometric shapes**, **organic lines** and elements of nature that mirror story telling. The tiles are formed with various characteristics, like geometric **patterns**, **arabesques**, **calligraphy** and etc, which are all beyond impressive (8.1). Yet the one that captured my interest was the arabesque, especially seen the **Haft Rang (7 Colours)** tile **composition technique -** the **organic** elements that are borrowed from nature with all seven colours. The arabesque tiles with their infinite symmetrical pattern trace their origins back to 11th century CE near Baghdad (8.2) and immediately became part of Islamic architecture. The artists derived their inspiration from flowers, intricate lines and vines, which is why such ornament is considered biomorphic, i.e. mirroring nature without making any specific references. Consequently, religion shaped the development of the arabesques, as Islamic art forbid depiction of humans and animal, thus making the artists focus on geometric patterns and incorporation of writing (calligraphy). Symmetry and repetition were very important to the artists, as well as variety. Infinitely many different ornaments can be seen on the buildings of mosques and other Islamic architecture (8.3). Yet the **arabesques** did not only remain on the buildings, but quickly spread its popularity and presence to **textile**, like **fabric** and **carpets** due to its adaptability to any media - be it paper or ivory. With its wide popularity, the arabesques were exposed to changes according to regional and national styles (8.4). Every region possessed their way of viewing the religion, and perhaps the differing vegetation in the arabesques around the world attempt to depict paradise that is described in the Quran as a garden. Usually the arabesques would be mixed with repeating geometrical patterns, and scholars think it is also allusive of the sophistication and importance of mathematics in Islam. The ornament is typically impossible to trace to its origin, because it is 'closed'. The lines are connected to each other, thereby creating a loop. The structural lines are based on the geometrical grid base to ensure that the ornaments are reflected correctly (8.5).

(8.1)
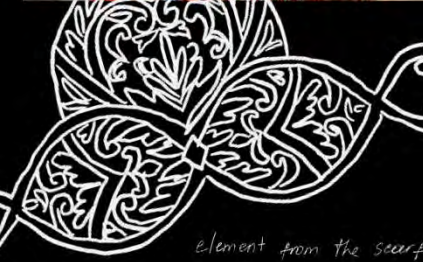
I derived my inspiration for the heavy focus on **details** from the mosques that I used to see since I was a child and carpets that we had at home. I believe this is a matter of personal connection, which is why this artwork remains close to my heart. The **mosaics** at the mosque are the **point of referral**, it is the **allusion**, as I derived my inspiration for **photography** purely from **architecture** around me. The **arabesques**, **geometric details** and **storyline** create **visual abundance.** Yet the viewer is not overwhelmed, but rather fascinated by the richness and concentration of cultural wealth and **heritage**. However, I had to consider its role in the final **exhibition**. What is the **purpose** of my art? Is it to display perfection or imply the same message as other artworks? By depicting the flaws and weak sides of my culture and people, I ensure to add an **element** of beauty to it, because despite the issues that have a very prominent influence on women, I believe that it is worthy to juxtapose the negative message of the other artworks with pureness and positivity of my culture. I am not seeking for perfection, but rather attempting to display another, happier side of the story. The **background** and **cultural attire** work together to **represent** the richness of my culture. The **intricate details** on the scarf, **contrasting colour** of the face and a **blurred background** work **collaboratively** to locate **emphasis** on the **dominant area** of the artwork - the scarf, where the majority of **movement** can be observed. The **background** and **cultural attire** work together to represent the richness of my culture. In addition to that, **mixed media** is what makes this artwork quite unique, as it invites the audience to **repose** and **revive**, hence its title. It is a **point** of **admiration**, of fascination and of sympathy. The viewer can also make direct references to Islamic art from the scarf, as it is also rich of infinite ornaments that create a loop and represent the eternity that is a prominent factor in the religion. The arabesque's abundance of detail and its infinite number was an inspiration not just for this work, but for my whole exhibition. This technique taught me how to use detail to portray abundance, and that is present in all of my artwork through details in the jewelry. In this case, however, the details are all resembling the arabesques.
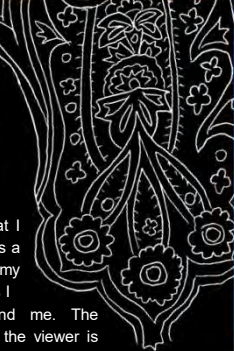
element from the scarf

element from the scarf

Critical Investigation on Steve McCurry

Steve McCurry is a well-known American **photographer** and **journalist**, whose works **capture** the difficulties and struggle that people in third world countries face (9.1). It is his pictures that I have long been admiring and trying to **mirror** due to the **complexity** of the **subject** that is **depicted** in such a **simplified composition**. For instance, "Afghan Girl" taken in 1984 is one of the most renown works by McCurry, as it shows a girl that has gone through war at such a young age and is now a refugee (9.3). The **bright red scarf** captures the **attention** of the **audience** and it is a **feature** that is similar to my works, where red is the **predominant colour** throughout my **exhibition**. This work **contrasts warm (scarlet red and kelly green) and cool (azure blue) colour schemes**, thereby creating **emphasis** in the centre. Her facial **expression** is the outstanding factor that allows the **viewer** to recognize fear and suffering that the girl had to experience at such a young age and sympathize. The **depiction** of a child suffering is a very touching and effective way of **communicating** the **intent** and evoking **empathy**. Children are not to blame for the war - they were born into it, and by **depicting** an innocent party struggling from inequality and violence makes McCurry's audience reflect and connect to their life and perhaps their children. This work in particular has caught my attention due to the **graphic weight** of the eyes. They say eyes tell a story and convey feelings, which is why the focus on the eye is so important. I can also feel connected to the work because of the parallels that I can draw with my culture. Afghanistan is, in fact, bordering with Tajikistan. We share a history and culture, language and cuisine, which is why I relate to this work on a bit of a more personal level.

Another work that is one of the **outstanding** pictures taken by McCurry is "Dust Storm" which was taken in Rajasthan, India in 1983 (9.2). The image shows women working while the sand storm began. The **background** is **blurred**, which indicates that the storm is very strong, and in the **centre** of the **photograph**, the women got together to protect each other from the extreme weather conditions. This **concept** of **togetherness** is introduced to the **audience**, as if implying that together we can survive even through the extreme. This **concept** touched me deeply to my core, and made me realize that it is the ultimate message that I must convey to my **audience** as well - oppression can be fought if women get together. This photograph inspired the **theme** of my **exhibition** - female empowerment and finding power in unity. Once again, **red** is the **dominant colour** in the **entire composition**. The **bright red** national clothes create **contrast** with the **background**, which represents the nature that is depicted in such **subtle** and **monotonous colour scheme**. This further supplies **emphasis** to the six women in the **dominant area**. Additionally, I believe the **texture** of the sand allows the **audience** to immerse into the **atmosphere** of the **photograph** and experience it **tactilely** and **auditorily**. I am very much inspired by the power of **lens-media** to control and direct the viewer's **senses** and **perception**. These photographs **inspired** me in terms of **composition**, **emphasis** that they create and the **general message** and **purpose**, which I implemented into my **photography** - "Her". I have **sketched** down the poses for my photograph and employed the **rule of thirds** into the **composition** - similarly to Steve McCurry's "Afghan Girl" in attempt to reach the level of **balance** and **unity** that McCurry displays in his **photographs**.

However, when I analyze a work, I question the authorial choice - why did the photographer choose this exact colour scheme and this exact composition? Was he directed by his intent, and are these photographs taken on the spot or set up? Through some research, I found that "Dust Storm" was taken on the spot - when Steve McCurry happened to encounter this event. Yet the "Afghan Girl" was set up for the photograph. The background was deliberately chosen to be green to complement

(9.1)

(9.2)

the cloth that is visible from the wholes in her shirt. Another thing that was attention grabbing to me was the significance of colour in his work. To fully understand the intent, I had to look deeper into the psychology of colour and identify the reasons for selection of bright red in the composition of both works. Red is also a dominant colour in my culture, due to its symbolic meaning. But then I began to question where the symbolic association came from. To understand the psychology of colour, it is first important to define colour. What is colour? Colour is a reflection of light from an object that interacts with the human eye. Objects, in fact, do not inherit colour, but rather reflect or absorb light to a certain extent, which is why colour is perceived differently (9.4).

Colours have different perceptions, which is subjective, but there are general effects on the brain that are objective at times. The warm colours evoke comfort, warmth and at times anger and danger, while the cool colours that typically signify tranquility, dignity and seriousness. I am particularly interested in scarlet red, because it is also a repeating colour throughout my exhibition. Red is the attention-grabbing colour. It is the one that screams with excitement, energy and sometimes anger. It is the most intense colour. When viewing the colour perception from the perspective of natural instincts, it is typically a sign of danger, as it resembles the colour of blood. Red colour triggers the alert system in our brain for its intensity and rareness in nature. When being encountered with red for the first time, the brain perceives it as a sign of danger, preventing us from interacting with it and thereby saving us. This natural instinct of self-preservation is what associates red with intense emotions.

As humans became less dependent on their survival skills throughout evolution and progression towards formation of an intellectual society that employed technology, red became the colour that signifies danger and victory, love and war. It is for this reason majority of flags in the world have the red colour, and some cultures adopting the colour as a sign of victory and strength (9.5). Despite the connotations that were attached to the colour, red still remains the attention grabbing colour in art, which is why artists use it so much. Steve McCurry used red to draw the audience's attention to the face of the girl in "Afghan Girl" and to the centre of the image in "Dust Storm". I have implemented the same technique by using a red scarf around the face for it to draw more attention on the dominant parts of the face that I want to emphasize on. In my photography, I also use bright red to capture the attention of my audience at first, and then draw the eye closer to the area that is enclosed within the red - the face, in order to locate importance to the facial expression.

Colour Pencil & Digital Media Experimentation

To continue on with my theme of female empowerment, I wanted to make another portrait that conveyed belligerence. I wanted to show the most pride and strength because this piece had to me the climax of the story. I have taken **photographs** with the **facial expressions** that suggest my intent, and I decided to make a coloured-pencil portrait from it, which can be found below. For this portrait I decided to experiment with the **media** and used coloured pencils - something I have never worked with before. The first step was the jewelry on the head (tikka), which turned out relatively successful, considering that it was my first time using **coloured pencils** for this scale (60x90cm). To make this tint, I have used at least 6 different **coloured** pencils that resulted in the final colour displayed below. True, the tikka is silver and it does appear grey, yet I saw more colours in it than just grey. I saw some **violet**, **blue**, **brown** and **green** that **collaboratively** created an impression of **grey**. Those colours appeared to me because of the **reflection** from the surface.

It was the reflection of the sky, the sun rays, and the cloth as well. Therefore it was important for me to **capture** every **shade** to get **realistic**.
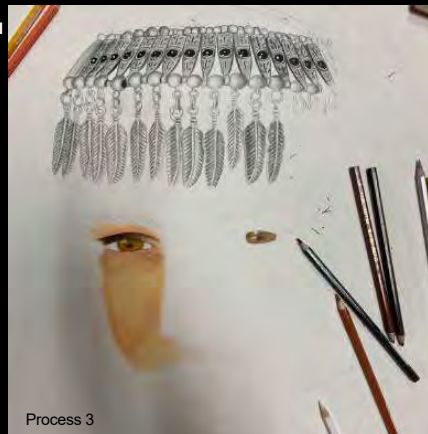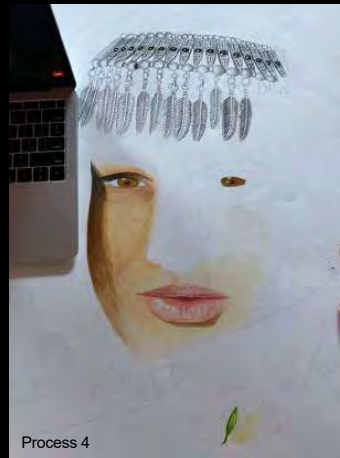

Process 1

Before even completing this piece, I decided to move on to the eyes, as I cannot stay on one area of the artwork for a long period of time. The eyes did not turn out with much success, and rather **showcased** to some extent the result of **limited effort** and **skill** put into creation of art. Thinking that it is because the piece is yet unfinished, I proceeded to the skin tone - which was the hardest thing to achieve. The skin tone was conforming with general standards, but I wanted to exceed them. I began to add the **dark shades** too soon, which was a big mistake. The colour was not appropriate, as well as the direction of the **pencil stroke**, which can be seen in Process 4. Coloured pencil is not flexible at all similarly to watercolour, as any mistake made on the paper is a mistake that is hard to correct without spoiling the quality of the paper and getting unwanted **texture** on the surface of the paper that **disrupts** the **pencil strokes**.
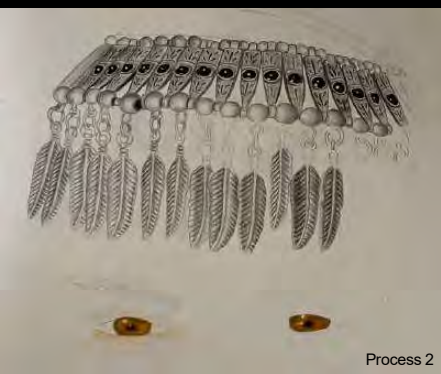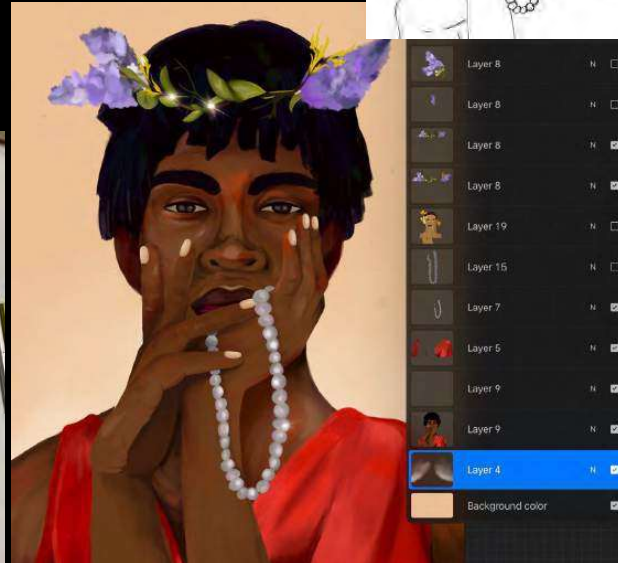

Process 2

Process 3

Process 4

All photographs and drawings are mine, not submitted for marking unless stated otherwise

It was hard to erase and correct the mistakes, such as incorrect **direction** of **stroke**, wrong **proportions** of the nose and visible strokes on the lips. It was very hard to achieve the blending without the presence of blending tools, and thats when I remembered the old trick from kindergarten to add water to pencils. Yet in this case, I used a damp cotton pad to **blend** the colours together and it worked. It even erased some of the colour off of the paper. Nevertheless, no matter how hard i have tried to remove the **dark shades** already present on the skin, the efforts were made in vain, as it only worsened the quality of the paper and made it harder to work with afterwards. This artwork has **failed**, and I decided to move to another **media**. A media where you cannot make mistakes.

I have recently been practicing sketching using **digital media**. I have discovered that it is easier to work with because of one function - reverse. The reverse function allows to mitigate the risk of losing time on correction of mistakes. This happened to me a lot when I was drawing on paper, which is why **digital media** appeared more **attractive**. At first, I developed a new concept from a brainstorm session, which was an add-on to my theme:

femininity in men. Once I have completed the **composition**, I realized that I required more skill before being able to submit such work for marking. I have tried variations of **compositions**, changing the **colour palette**, adding and removing certain **elements**, yet I was still not feeling satisfied. I believe I required more **skill** using digital media and adapting to the technology and its specific tools. It was something very new to me, that I wanted to explore, but it turned out with limited **success**.

Another failed work made me think of ways where I can control the appearance and composition of the work, while not compromising on the quality due to lack of skill and practice. **Lens media** appeared as the most viable option, as it allowed me to direct the subject and manipulate the source of light. For my **photography**, I considered to implement two of the most essential colours in my exhibition - red and white. For this reason I have chosen gowns that are of the same **colours**. Jewelry was added, as well as other **surrounding** factors and now it was only a matter of **facial expression**.

Final decision to choose photography as a medium after series of failed attempts with other media

Photography Process and Reflection

Even more than **realistic drawings**, **photography** captures the very finest details that make the work captivating to the **audience**. It is the world's most common way of communication, that has changed the structure of our society. This **media** is now available to anyone , which is what makes it the basic building block of modern communication. **Light** is the most important ingredient in the preparation of a photograph, as its **reflection** allows the camera to capture   **colour**. The **vibrance** of colours, the **saturation** and the **position** can all be digitally manipulated for a greater effect and impact, which is what drew drew me to this media a lot, and that is what I used.
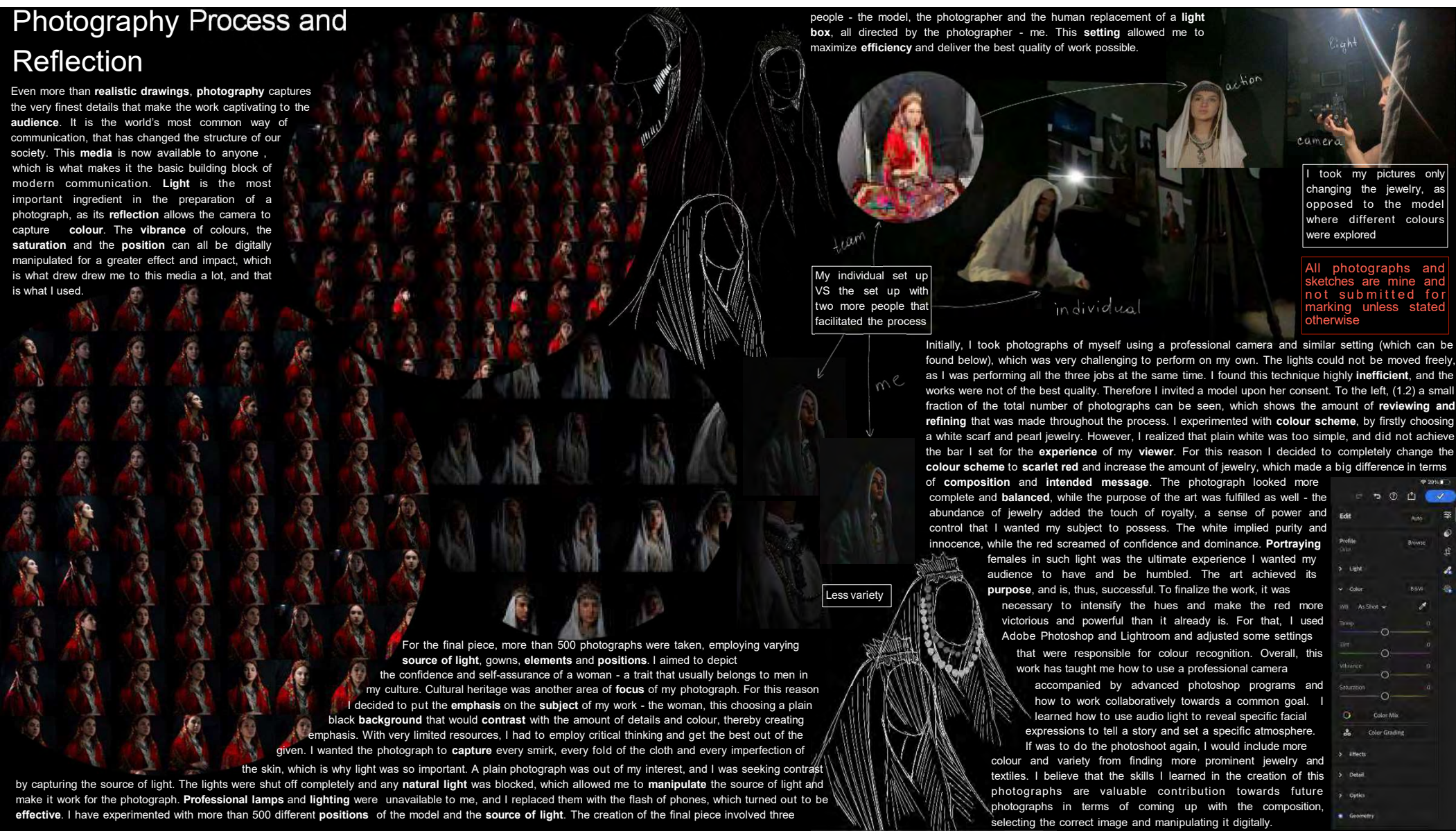
people - the model, the photographer and the human replacement of a **light box**, all directed by the photographer - me. This **setting** allowed me to maximize **efficiency** and deliver the best quality of work possible.

team

My individual set up VS the set up with two more people that facilitated the process

individual

me

I took my pictures only changing the jewelry, as opposed to the model where different colours were explored

Initially, I took photographs of myself using a professional camera and similar setting (which can be found below), which was very challenging to perform on my own. The lights could not be moved freely, as I was performing all the three jobs at the same time. I found this technique highly **inefficient**, and the works were not of the best quality. Therefore I invited a model upon her consent. To the left, (1.2) a small fraction of the total number of photographs can be seen, which shows the amount of **reviewing and refining** that was made throughout the process. I experimented with **colour scheme**, by firstly choosing a white scarf and pearl jewelry. However, I realized that plain white was too simple, and did not achieve the bar I set for the **experience** of my **viewer**. For this reason I decided to completely change the **colour scheme** to **scarlet red** and increase the amount of jewelry, which made a big difference in terms of **composition** and **intended message**. The photograph looked more complete and **balanced**, while the purpose of the art was fulfilled as well - the abundance of jewelry added the touch of royalty, a sense of power and control that I wanted my subject to possess. The white implied purity and innocence, while the red screamed of confidence and dominance. **Portraying** females in such light was the ultimate experience I wanted my audience to have and be humbled. The art achieved its **purpose**, and is, thus, successful. To finalize the work, it was necessary to intensify the hues and make the red more victorious and powerful than it already is. For that, I used Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom and adjusted some settings that were responsible for colour recognition. Overall, this work has taught me how to use a professional camera accompanied by advanced photoshop programs and how to work collaboratively towards a common goal. I learned how to use audio light to reveal specific facial expressions to tell a story and set a specific atmosphere. If was to do the photoshoot again, I would include more colour and variety from finding more prominent jewelry and textiles. I believe that the skills I learned in the creation of this photographs are valuable contribution towards future photographs in terms of coming up with the composition, selecting the correct image and manipulating it digitally.

Less variety

For the final piece, more than 500 photographs were taken, employing varying **source of light**, gowns, **elements** and **positions**. I aimed to depict the confidence and self-assurance of a woman - a trait that usually belongs to men in my culture. Cultural heritage was another area of **focus** of my photograph. For this reason I decided to put the **emphasis** on the **subject** of my work - the woman, this choosing a plain black **background** that would **contrast** with the amount of details and colour, thereby creating emphasis. With very limited resources, I had to employ critical thinking and get the best out of the given. I wanted the photograph to **capture** every smirk, every fold of the cloth and every imperfection of the skin, which is why light was so important. A plain photograph was out of my interest, and I was seeking contrast by capturing the source of light. The lights were shut off completely and any **natural light** was blocked, which allowed me to **manipulate** the source of light and make it work for the photograph. **Professional lamps** and **lighting** were unavailable to me, and I replaced them with the flash of phones, which turned out to be **effective**. I have experimented with more than 500 different **positions** of the model and the **source of light**. The creation of the final piece involved three

Ideas and Intentions

This **artwork** is the last **two dimensional** work that is planned to go in my **exhibition**, and it is the **ultimate grand finale**. I wanted drama, **catharsis** and a **though-provocative depiction**. The end of the journey through oppression had to be a happy ending, for every story must end with a good ending. This is why I chose to end my **story** with hope. After an **extensive brainstorming session**, I concluded that the best way to **evoke sentimental response** from the audience is to use **dramatic illumination**. I wanted to show the **effect** and strong impact of oppression on women through showing the period for which they were oppressed - the **time**. Yet time is an **intangible aspect**, or rather irrelevance that was hard to **illustrate**. For this reason, I chose to **depict** an old woman, where the wrinkles are the **indicator** of the passed time. With the planned **manipulation** of **source of light**, I should be able to **emphasize** every fold of the skin and every wrinkle and make it stand out. This **direction** of **light** does not only create **emphasis**, but also **symbolizes** hope - something that is almost there. The subject of the **drawing** faces the light - the hope, but herself, she was **immersed** into the **abyss** and into the **unknown darkness**, which is why I decided to title this **artwork** "Before I Leave". "Before I Leave" should be a strong message for the **audience** to understand that the older generation will leave and take the issues of their time with them. Oppression is not constant, it is temporary if people choose it to be so. I wanted the audience to understand that it is up to us to start it, and also up to us to end it.

While thinking of the **composition** of the work, I thought of who to use as a **model** for my **reference**, and I decided to ask my grandmother for a picture. Additionally, her name "Jahonamo" carries a very symbolic connotation that would supply **depth** to my **artwork**. "Jahonamo" means **reflection** of the world, and I believe her name would be a great addition to the general story - she **reflects** the old generation that admires the youth for their bravery and strong will. To get more **insight** into her **perspective**, I talked to her about it. "I recall my youth, when we went through war, through hunger, and I am thankful to God that my children are at peace" - a phrase that my grandmother dropped in our conversation, which was very **thought-provocative** to me. The phrase was touching to my core, and I wanted to **capture** her **ambition** and **admiration** of the youth in the very **close-to-real-life manner**. I knew I had to get a **photograph** as a reference picture to facilitate the drawing process. I believe I was not yet skilled at making **portraits** from **observations**, as that required considerable skill and ingenuity.

The **pose** mattered the most, and I had to prepare some **preliminary sketches** for the poses of the photograph. I wanted a **close-cropped composition** in order to **fully accentuate** on the **facial features** of my grandmother. I have came up with a couple of **sketches** as I was **brainstorming**, which can be seen to the right. I explored a variety of poses for my grandmother to **represent** hope. Some possessed **submissive qualities**, while others showed too much **dominance**. I have also **contemplated** on **exaggeration** of wrinkles and presence of jewelry. In my **exhibition**, jewelry **signified abundance** and wealth - products of great **authority** that was **attributed** to the younger generation. Yet, I could not leave the jewelry out at all, as it was necessary to make a **geographical reference** to Tajikistan. I thought perhaps one small piece would be sufficient for fulfilling the **purpose** such as a ring or an earring. Finally, it was essential to find the right **location** for the art. Did the **background** make any difference and should I explore ways of using the background for overall **contribution** to the **message**? I decided that it would be best to not **detract** the eye from the **details** on the face, and the **background** must be **monotonous**.
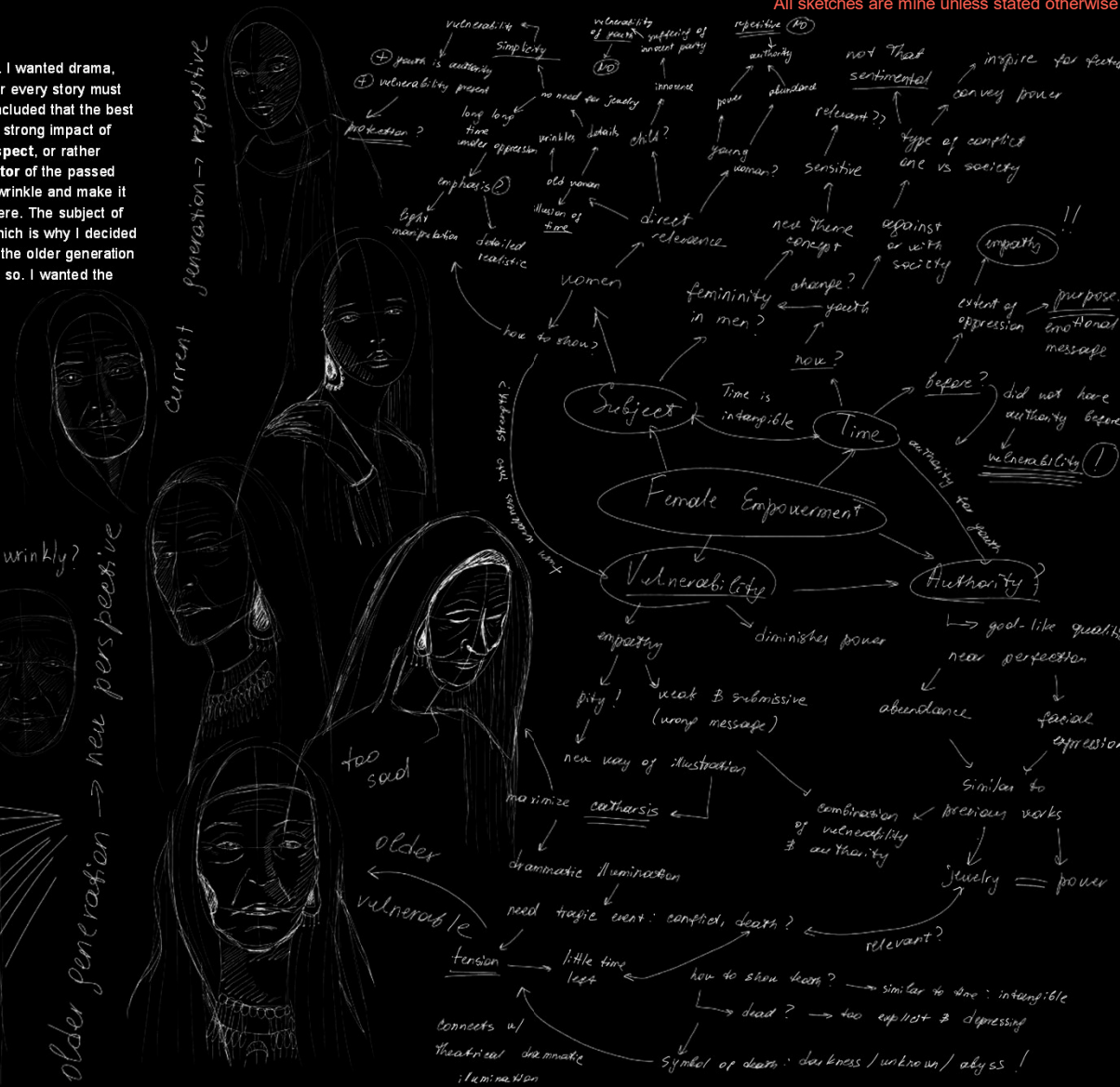
Artist inspiration & Process

When I think of ways to **manipulate** the **source of light**, I think of Yousuf Karsh's works. Yousuf Karsh was a Canadian Armenian photographer that was globally renown for his portraits of famous individuals, and was recognized as the greatest photographer of the 20th century (13.6) In my opinion, his works are **mastery of theatrical lighting** and **focus** on the **facial expressions**. Though Karsh's **photography style** varied, I am more interested in his **black and white portraits** because of their **formality**, **lighting** and **simplicity**. Most, if not all of his works employ **artificial lighting** for **contrast**, which resembled the **theatrical, dramatic illumination**. In order to master **light**, one must control its **direction** and **scatter** on the subject. By **eliminating** all light in the room (both natural and artificial), Karsh was able to **direct** the source of light (the **light box**) by simply relocating it around the subject until the light reveals the features that the **photographer** wants his audience to see, and the ones that best express the **personality** of the **subject**. Employing the same procedures, I was able to achieve dramatic illumination for my photography as well - I eliminated all the light (natural and artificial) in the room and used a phone flash to direct and control the source of light.

13.1

13.2

13.3

13.4

13.5

The **subjects** of his works were usually **influential** and famous people like Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, Queen Elizabeth, Ernest Hemingway and etc. Karsh **captures** personality rather than a simple image through **manipulation of light, position and facial expression.**

His photographs are **monotonous black and white**, and employ **studio light** to **emphasize** every wrinkle, smirk, and eyebrow raise. His photography style inspired me for my grand finale two dimensional work, as I wanted the falling action of the story to demonstrate hope and aspiration. For this reason I have taken a couple pictures using different poses and colour schemes.

I have **experimented** with **dramatic illumination** before, in both **media** - **photography** (1) and **pencil** (2). To get more skills in correct **distribution** of **highlights** and **shadows**, I have practiced **pencil drawings** before. Similarly to Karsh, I wanted the **light** to **reveal** the struggle and hope of the older generation towards the youth that brings **change** to the societal norms. I have experimented with **directing the source of light** from the side to capture every wrinkle. The wrinkles **emphasize** the time, the time that it took for change to occur.

The **photograph** of Humphrey Bogard - American actor (9.1) is perhaps the most **engaging**, as it does not just illustrate the actor, but every film that he has played in and his typical role in it. With a **focus** on the **pensive gaze**, Karsh focuses on his **expressive characteristics** - the status and the bold personality of the actor. The **extra edge** is given to the photograph by the **black tones** that overshadow the **subtle highlights**, thereby creating **contrast** and mirroring **theatrical lighting**.
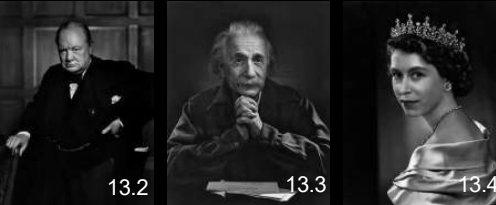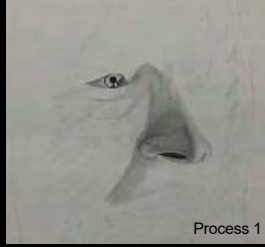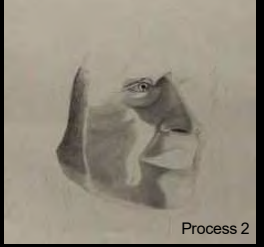
Majority of his other **photographs** employ the same techniques - manipulation of light to **reveal** on the personality of the subject, and allow the audience to get a more **intimate view and connection** with the **authority figure**.

The bold use of **studio light** and **closely cropped composition** that I learned from Karsh's photography allows me to engage my **audience** and **capture** the hope and **aspiration**. The bold use of **studio light** and **closely cropped composition** allows me to engage my **audience** and **capture** the hope and **aspiration**.

My unresolved pencil drawing (2)

My resolved photograph (1)

My resolved photograph not submitted for marking

I selected the appropriate reference picture and began the process. **Pencil** is my favourite **media**, as it allows to achieve the **realistic effect** the most for me. My previous portrait was also done using pencil, yet I believe it was not rich in value and contrast. In other words, it lacked drama and contrast. This work was heavy in value, and required a wide range of shades. The artwork was done using the grid method. I began with the lightest shade and increased the intensity of the saturation as I got closer to the parts that were darker in value. Process 3 shows how I identified the darkest shade of the picture and located it there for reference of how darker the skin and the surrounding has to be. The result of this is seen in Process 4. In Process 5 I have developed the darkest area using a graphite stick and couple of 8B pencils. Using an electric eraser, I was able to add highlights and bleaks in the eyes and the ring. It also provided precision.
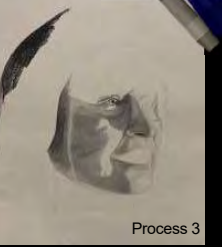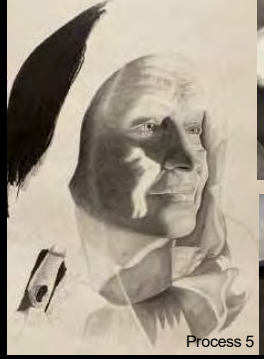

Process 1

Process 2

Process 3

Process 4

Process 5

Process 6

Process 6 was finishing the background, which I believe was the hardest part of the whole process. It was hard because I only had these 3 blending tools with a maximum diameter of 2cm, which was clearly not sufficient for finishing the background of a 90x160cm artwork. I decided to use a cotton pad, as it provided greater surface area. It was an effective way of blending, but very slow. considering the time constraints, I have asked my teacher for help and was advised to damp the cotton pad using water. This method provided efficiency and accelerated the process by a great amount, as I did not have to use pencil anymore - the water already darkened the shade that was already on the paper. However, such method required being careful, as water might spill on the parts that did not require such technique and were already resolved. Therefore I covered those parts with a thick cloth. This prevented any drops from spoiling the drawing. The process was quite messy, which can be seen from my hands - also required care.

Investigating Relationship between Scale and Perception in Art

Does size matter in arts? **Size** is the first **prominent feature** of an artwork that creates the first **impression**. Yet determining whether the **artwork** is big or small is done relative to its **surroundings**, and it is all about **relativity**. **Colossal artworks** are those that appear bigger than its surroundings (sometimes including the viewer themselves). Those works are hard to admire closely, and one must view it from a distance. A study by a scientific journal - Sage Journal reveals that bigger artworks (those in the range of 60cm and 120cm) were observed from an average distance of 1.75m. This is reasonable, considering that in order to get a full **picture** one must look at it from a **distance**. The study also reveals that the amount of time for observation of a bigger artwork (50.5 seconds) is more than for a smaller artwork (36.2 seconds). This is because **grand scale works** usually have a lot of **details** that make up the **overall composition**, especially **series of realism**. It requires a larger **attention span**, and **compels** one to examine it longer from all possible **angles** (14.1). Usually, the size is **manipulated** by its surroundings and the artworks next to it. **Grand scale works** tend to **humble** the viewer and present the subject of the art in an **authoritative** light and imply **higher order of significance**. The bigger artworks are considered to be of higher value, especially in the **commercial art world**. They are usually higher in monetary value due to the production cost of this piece and number of people involved. **Colossal art** typically involved teams of artists working on one project, which requires a lot of material, labour and time. This art sets an **atmosphere** and takes the **dominant position** in the **exhibition** and impresses the audience (14.2). This is precisely the reason why I chose to use bigger size paper for my artworks, for a large work always demands attention.

Smaller scale works can also make a big **impression**, especially after the economic crisis of 2008 that began the trend of questioning the reasoning of large scale works due to their economical inconvenience and inability to afford. Smaller artworks resurged because of their **elusive intimacy** that creates a **bond** between the **art** and the **collector** - they convey comfort and create **spatial balance**. Opposing the **contemporary movement** "bigger is better", smaller art takes into account the production costs and materials to imply that the world can be **impacted emotionally** as much as a bigger scale art can. (14.3)
The **intimacy** that a smaller artwork possesses is the reason why I chose to make one of my artworks relatively small in scale, as it stood out from the rest by its size.
Ultimately, size does matter in art, and it must be considered and taken into account in advance to **align** with the **purpose**. In my case, the art had to be big in order to make a **bold statement** about change happening within my culture. A big artwork creates an impression and shows its significance, which is why I chose to present hope in big scale - to state that the change is colossal and significant - the change that comes from the younger generation.


"Before I Leave" Reviewing and Refining

My resolved artwork submitted for marking (90x160cm)

SUMMARY:

General Message: hope of the older generation for a brighter future - ultimate resolution of the story
Media: pencil drawing
Technique employed: dramatic/theatrical illumination inspired by Yousef Karsh

I decide on the **success** of the work by seeing if it has achieved and even exceeded its **purpose**. In this case, I believe I have succeeded to capture the emotion that I wanted the **audience** to grasp - hope for the future. Perhaps the **message** might not seem so straightforward due to the **layers** of **metaphorical** meaning that must be revealed. Additionally, some **context** is required to understand the **intent** of the work, as without context the **viewers** might assume that the **portrait** is simply **decorative**. This artwork was an interesting journey for me in exploring how grand scale artworks affect perception and viewer's response. I have also learned a lot about my culture and the oppression that women faced through generations. I got some first hand information from my grandmother that supported my claims, and I conducted some research to support my **theme**. I believe this artwork could have been better off with more **explicit facial expressions** of hope and joy, while the final art is rather serene and tranquil. Through this art, I learned how to **manage** my **materials** better and was pushed out of my comfort zone to find **techniques** that would improve my **efficiency**. I was constrained by time, and it was very important for me to manage my time well, considering the scale of the work that required a lot of time spent on **smaller details**.

As per technical skills, I believe this work would definitely be better if I have tested my materials before using them on the final piece. This is especially the case with the scarf, where I used a **graphite stick** that did not give the same **texture** as a **pencil** would. It was especially hard to make the **details** on the skin, such as the **pores**. I wanted the art to be **hyperrealistic**, but did not achieve that **effect** due to lack of experience. I believe if I had more time and experience, I should have added the pores and worked on the skin piece by piece, rather than rushing it through with the tint. This damaged the **texture** of the **skin** on the cheek that faces the **audience** because of the **rough pencil strokes.** At times I would pick the wrong pencils as I would not be sure of the difference between **soft** and **hard**, with **chalk** and

without it. The **background** could have also been improved if I spent more time on using **cotton** rather than using **blending tool** that makes **visible strokes**. Overall, if I was to do this artwork again, I would spend more time on the **bigger part**s that have **less texture.** To **maximize** the scale and the impact, I have located the artwork higher than the **eye-level** to make my audience look up to the **drawing**. This adds more authority and **demands** more attention from the viewer. I needed this **effect** to resolve the **conflict** in my story, and it was important to **maximize engagement**. I noticed that people viewed my **exhibition** from a **distance**, because it was at times bigger than the viewers. I have included pictures of myself next to the work for indication of **size** and **perception** of the audience. **Up-close**, the viewer can see the **pencil strokes** and **texture** created, yet just like with Claude Monet's **paintings**, one must look at it from afar to understand the nature of it due to the **impressionistic style** that he employs in his art. I have absolutely enjoyed working on this piece, as I learned a lot of **techniques** using **pencil**, and how to locate a work to achieve a **certain effect**. I also learned how to plan the **exhibition** ahead for location purposes and I will definitely implement the **knowledge** in my future **artworks** using **pencil** and other **media**.
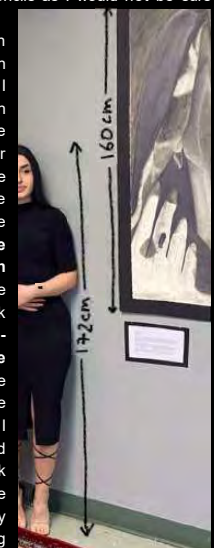
Reviewing Ideas and Intentions for Installation

Installation is my final piece. Throughout my **exhibition**, I used my **technical skills** in order to achieve **realism**, and the final piece had to be the closest to realism as possible - **hyperrealism**. **Three dimensional art** has the ultimate dimension that I did not fully develop in my other works - **depth**. I have manipulated **light**, **colour** and **perspective** to achieve an **illusion** of depth, yet it always remained an illusion. Three dimensional art **immerses** the viewer into itself and the story being told, which is why I decided to use installation as a **resolution** of the **storytelling**. There was a lot of available space for my **installation**, which is why the number of choices was great. I selected the three most viable options, and from the three I must select one that **represents** my idea the best. It was important for me to not make this a **cultural exhibition**, but **artistic**. I have gathered a lot of cultural attributes and some of my own works to work collaboratively in **art creation process**. I had to make the photographs and the scarf the focal points of my exhibition, and I had to locate them in a way to not detract from the general exhibition and even complement the other artworks by its presence. I also wanted to **viewer** to be part of the **installation**, feel the comfort and warmth that it **conveys**. The **installation** had to **draw** the audience in, which is why pictures served as the **entrance** and the first **encounter** with my culture, and a typical Persian living room.

Option 1 is to hang the **photographs** (10x15cm and smaller) throughout the **exhibition space**, and **display** the shal on the table below the other **artworks**. This would give the exhibition an **L-shape** and **facilitate** the **navigation process**. Nevertheless, the pictures block the other art, thereby making it harder to follow the story and find the direction. **Integrating** an **installation** into the whole exhibition appeared to be a poor choice as it did not exactly achieve the **purpose**, and it simply hid the other artworks that I had before, making it difficult for the **audience** to move around, as slight contact with the photographs might have damaged the exhibition and make it inconvenient to observe closely (especially the smallest work of the exhibition.
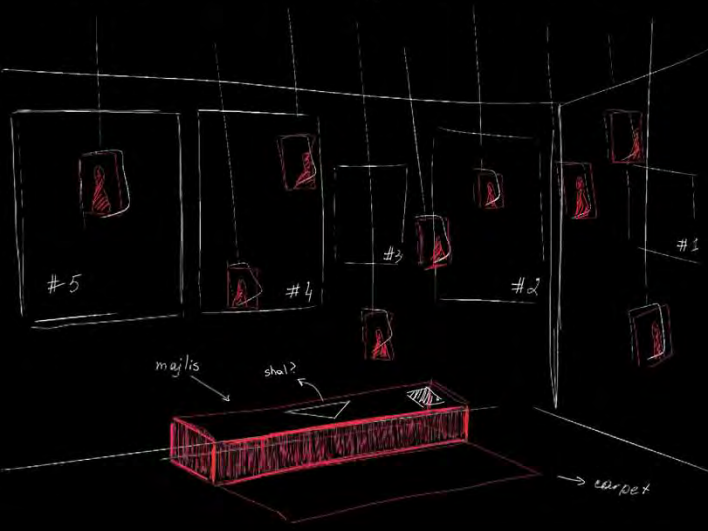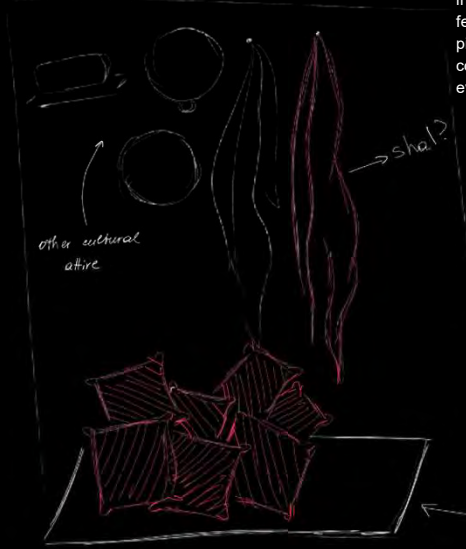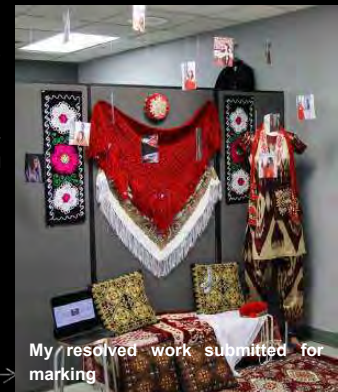
Second option was to hang the **shal** and the **photographs** on the wall (or not include them at all). I believe it is better than Option 1, because it makes the **installation** a **separate entity** that is viewed at a convenience - one can get closer to the artworks and the installation and become part of it. This **increased viewer engagement** relatively to the previous option, which was beneficial for me, however, it lacked the **immersion effect**, as the pictures were thought to be hanged on the walls. This did not quite **fulfill** my desire to fully **engage** the **audience**, as it resembled a typical **cultural exhibition**. It also did not display the shal the way I wanted, as it did not **accentuate** on the **complexity** of **knitting** and simply **conveyed colour**. I wanted my work to be the **centre** of the installation, and instead this option hides the important parts. I wanted the **photographs** to serve as an entry to the **installation**, as if **inviting** the viewer into it by showing comfort and giving a **sense** of belonging. I also could accentuate on the complexity of my hand-made shal by contrasting it with the background. Option 3 was the last and the best choice, as it has solved the issues previously encountered with other options. Option 3 was to take a separate corner for the exhibition and use the photographs to immerse and involve the audience - lead them into the installation by hanging them from the ceiling. This is how the photographs stood out from the exhibition. The shal was also the focal point, all thanks to the way it was displayed. The details were evident from the contrast with the background. However, the background was grey, which did not create an intense contrast. Therefore, I decided to hand a white shal that was part of the cultural attire (not made by me) to contrast with the red shal. This made the details of the knitting stand out. I even added lights at the back of the knitting to make the details stand out even more.

Option 3 was my final choice, as it made my **hand-made pieces** be the **prominent** part of the **exhibition**. It made my intentions clear, as I wanted the viewer to feel comfort and fall in the sense of tranquility. After the heavy discussion of female oppression in Tajikistan, the conflict is finally over and this installation is the ultimate resolution of the story. This piece had to be a place of comfort, and this is precisely why I chose to make the appearance of the installation to be composed of organic lines, as opposed to the sharpness that one gets from geometrical precision. Once I put everything together for the final look, I noticed that the majlis looks relatively empty. The **pearls** and a hat were, therefore, an addition in terms of details that had to fill in the space, which I believe was effective. I also decided to add a mannequin, initially for displaying the shal, but then it became simply an addition to the overall exposition by displaying the cultural attire and jewelry. I have also noticed that the area under my two dimensional artworks was empty and required some additional props. I found a journal table and located it beneath the drawings. The table was covered by cloth, jewelry and other props relating to my Tajik culture.

Final outlook of Option 3 in real life - most effective

My resolved work submitted for marking

Details on the shal are noticeable

Within the exhibition space → Option 1

Separate wall ? → Option 2

Separate corner → Option 3

other cultural attire

shal?

carpet

majlis

shal?

carpet

shal

majlis

mannequin

part of exhibition?

purpose : fill in empty space

Stitching and Prop Gathering

When I was in primary school, my grandmother taught me how to do **stitching, knitting** and **sewing**. I feel the best comfortable with **knitting** with a **knock** - a needle that has a hook at the end. This hook allows to pass the **thread** through the **loops**. However, this sort of knitting is not basic, as it requires considerable skill and time. This scarf is very famous in my country, called "Shal", as it is very warm during cold winters in the Pamir region. The colour red is once again a reoccurring **colour** throughout my exhibition, which is **symbolic** of victory and power. For this shal, I did not have a specific scheme on paper, because I have done a similar shal before. I base piece illustrated below is 17 cm in length. From the base line, 12 columns were created in T-shape. Once the base piece was done, I started to build ro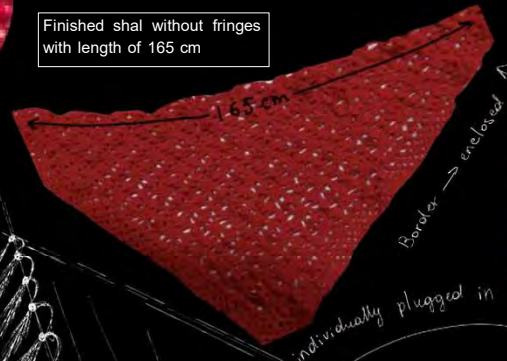ws of same pieces in layers on top. The The **quantity** of pieces had to increase by 2, following an odd number patter: 1-3-5-7-... This technique shares a common ground between these three knitting styles: **Chevron** and **Lace**, where columns of **diagonal stitching** are **separated** by openings, i.e. eyelet ribs. The **openings** are also presented diagonally in my knitting. The second style is **Fans** and **Feathers** - the classic **knitting** style which is the beginner level for with **eyelet** ribs. It is a knitting style in a form of a wave, because there is equal amount of thread in overs and decreases of the knitting that sets a same **amplitude** for the wave, i.e. a fan. The third technique is **Lace** and **Diamonds**, also known as argyle with **eyelet ribs** - openings. Integration of all three **techniques** allowed me to produce oval ribs that looked like the petals of the flowers formed.
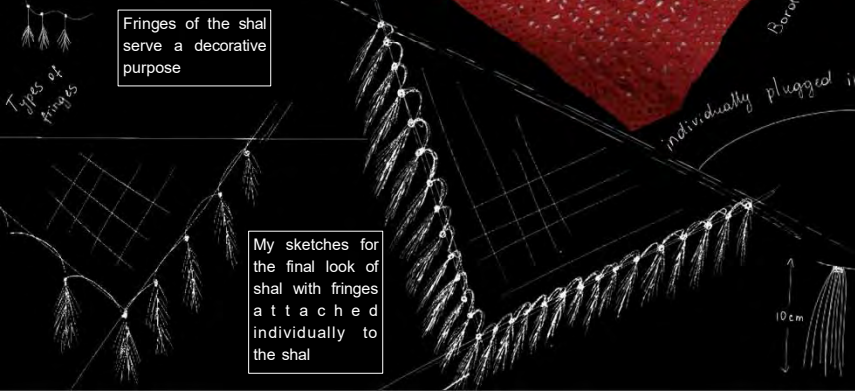
Hook

allows to pull the thread

x2 around hook

Two loops are first pulled individually and then 2 loops are pulled together for the base of the flower.

Knitting in T-pattern for the border of the base piece
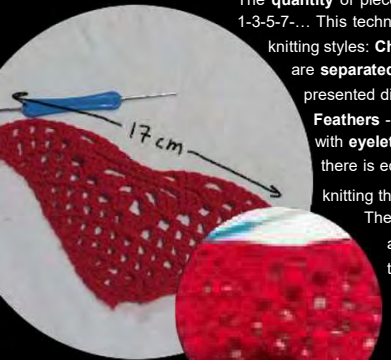
Finished shal without fringes with length of 165 cm
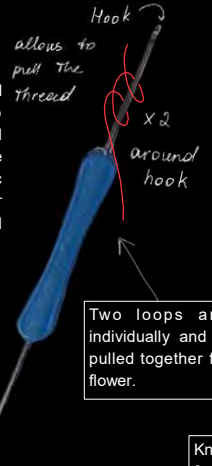
17 cm

165 cm

Border → enclosed

individually plugged in

Fringes of the shal serve a decorative purpose

Types of fringes

My sketches for the final look of shal with fringes attached individually to the shal

10 cm

Fringes are 10cm in length

Then, **photographs** had to be printed and stuck to a card. This card was then attached to a **fishing string** (for its invisible qualities) for I wanted the photographs to 'float' in the air, thereby **mirroring** memories. The **photographs** were taken prior to any thought of this artwork and were not submitted for marking individually. I believe the photographs were a strong addition to the overall exposition, as it immersed the viewer into the **installation** and presented itself in the form of memories of long last joy. They **complemented** the **colour** scheme of the shal, majlis and carpets as well.

contrast of red shal with white scarf

Details from the final exhibition and importance of every detail

The **knitting** took me about 2-3 weeks, considering the fact that mistakes were done throughout the way and it was a challenging process to correct them. Once one small part (i.e the base) was done, it was easy to work my way around it by passing the thread through loops to get to closer to the final point, where **individual threads** had to be **attached**. I believe that was the easiest and the most **satisfying** part of **knitting**, as it required relatively less skill - one string was pulled through a loop at a time and was cut at a certain length - mine were 10 cm. I planned the **length** of the scarf to range between 150-160 cm, and the actual length was about 165cm - a small **deviation** that did not alter the result or **compromise quality**. Overall, I think the pictures could have been better fixed in the ceiling, and it would have been better if I initially printed them on a **thicker paper** to **eliminate** the necessity to stick it to a card. The shal, in my **opinion**, was very successful, considering the fact that it has been a while for me since I was last knitting. I enjoyed making the shal, as it brought up many memories along the way, and made me re-learn the skill of knitting all over again.

carpets

jewelry

cultural attire

Collecting props for the final composition that included carpets, variety of jewelry, cultural attire and many more.

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