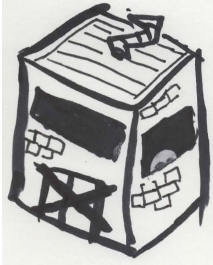


Communication of Ideas: *Presence*

These sketches were made with black marker and white pen, which are indicative of how much contrast I wanted to included at first. The sketch to the right was the first I put together for this piece. I had no idea where I wanted to take my images for the project, so I just used a house as a stand-in for any location. Many of these sketches, like this one, drew off of the idea of the ghost contrasting against a dark shadow.



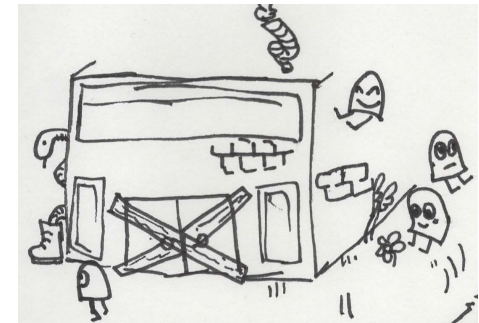
The sketch to the left is similar, in that I had no clue where I wanted to shoot yet, but it includes a few differences. One is that there is a person on the left of the house, which would've made for a very different result. It also includes arms for the ghost, which I felt was too many details for the simple character I was trying to create. I liked the idea of them almost being like kiwi birds, where they just hop and walk around without any working arm-like appendages, I feel like it makes them cute and unthreatening.



The sketch to the right is closer to what I ended up creating. It has a simple design, and having a background and a foreground became important to the piece as the ghosts begin hiding behind things not just from their perspective, but the viewer and camera's as well. This one has nailed what I wanted them to look like.

The sketch to the left is when I started coming up with ideas for locations, placing it in an extremely rudimentary abandoned factory like building. The ghost hiding at the bottom of the window also became important to my piece, not seeing most of the ghost.

Last is my sketch to the right, where I decided upon having many little ghost creatures floating around together. This building was a combination of my memory of a closed die-casting business near my house and an abandoned hotel/bar/trailer park. I wanted to have them interact with each other and their environment, which they do in my final piece. However, I felt like their looks were too cutesy, with ridiculously large eyes for their small bodies, as well as highly emotive mouths. There is also a snake in a boot hiding next to this building, which was drawn as an attempt at considering more than one type of creature in the piece, which I ultimately dropped because I felt that the ghost creatures were better off standing on their own.

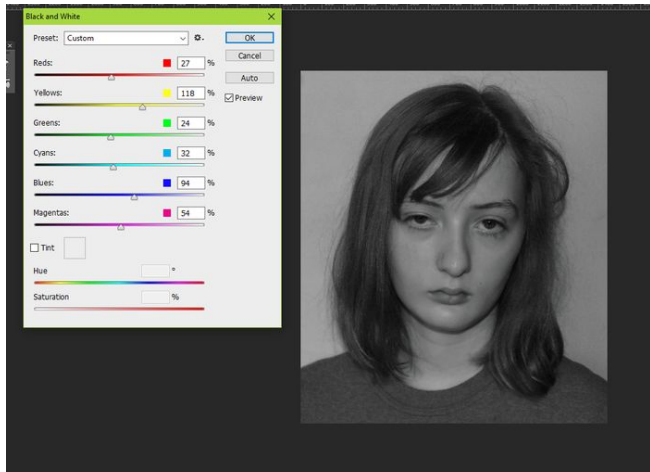
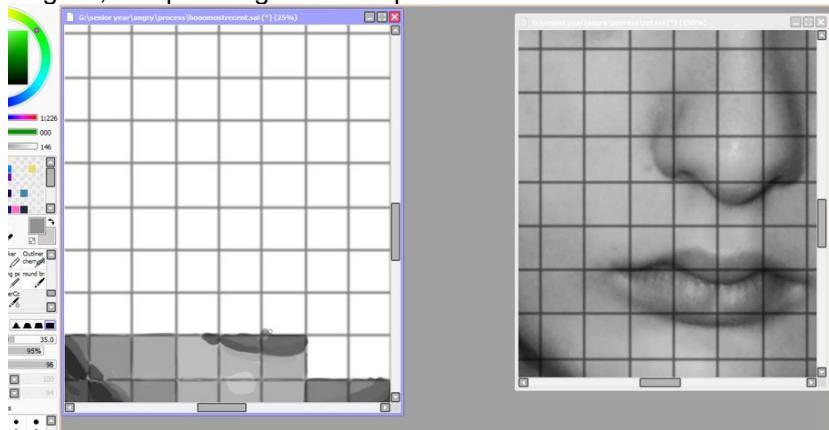


Skills, Techniques & Processes: *Exasperated*

After I took my reference images, I sifted through them and found which one I wanted to use. Then I brought it into Photoshop, and cropped it down to the framing I needed for the piece: from just above the top of the head down to around the bottom of the collarbone, from mid shoulder on each side. Next, I used the black and white filtering tool in Photoshop, and played with the values of each color a bit. Red, green, cyan and magenta were all darkened, whereas yellow and blue were lightened a bit. The blue was especially important, to make sure that my hair wasn't unreasonably dark.

Next I messed with the brightness and contrast of the image. I knew that since there's no color, there needs to be a wide range of values to make sure it is visually interesting. I brought up the brightness to make the whole image a bit lighter, as the background was a little dark. I took up the contrast in order to get that wider range of values, like the shine in my hair and on my nose that was less noticeable prior.

Next was to add the grid. I pulled a transparent grid off of the internet and pasted it twice to make it the size it needed to be, and adjusted it so there was a full square on all edges. After that, I made a canvas in Paint Tool Sai that had the same ratio of height and width that was larger than the original, and put the grid on it to paint in.



Each square was tackled independently, with the colors being picked directly from the source image. Most squares don't completely connect, they just have lines and colors that are the generally correct direction, which adds to the more abstract look.

While working on the piece, I had the basic areas that I had completed marked off to help keep track of how far I had gotten. I also used a single red dot as a marker, and there would be one on both images that could be used to get my bearings when I got lost after taking a break.

Skills, Techniques & Processes: *Phobics*



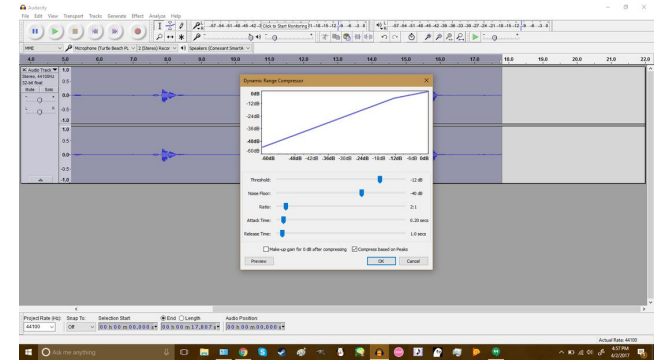
First, I disassembled the Furby, removing the fur and the shell. Then I took apart the entire thing, separating the base power supply from the chipboard from the motor. I left a few things connected, like the speaker to the chipboard. In the piece, I only used the motor and the power supply. My grandfather helped me assemble the parts and create a machine that essentially just runs the motor continuously.

We stuck two sewing pins into the plug, then clamped on two cords, one to each pin. Then those cords were clamped onto the contacts on the power supply. This caused the mouth to move, and the eyes to blink continuously, just the way I wanted. However, the eyes didn't blink satisfyingly,

and I tried to affix the face part closer to the part that makes them move, but nothing worked. This is when we placed the "face mask", back on. This allowed for the right amount of tension on the face to make the eyes blink completely. My grandpa added some wire to the side of it and wrapped it around to make it stay there. Next, I needed the machinery to be relatively self contained. We decided that the best course would be to create a cord that just connected from the power supply to the motor in the same way. He took a plug that was also two pins from a set of mini lights, and cut the plug off. He took another set of two cords, stripped the ends, and soldered them together, then slipping a heat shrink tube over the cords and shrinking them to make the cord more sturdy. Then he soldered the other ends of the cords to the contacts on the power supply. Now there is a cord running from the power supply that plugs into the cord running from the motor, causing the Furby motor to run continuously.



The next big part was putting together the installation components. The first thing I did was record the audio for the projected video. I took a list of common fears and listed them off with the phobia name and the definition. I used a program called Audacity to record and edit the audio, and I used a compression effect on the audio to make it sound more flat and have a more consistent volume.

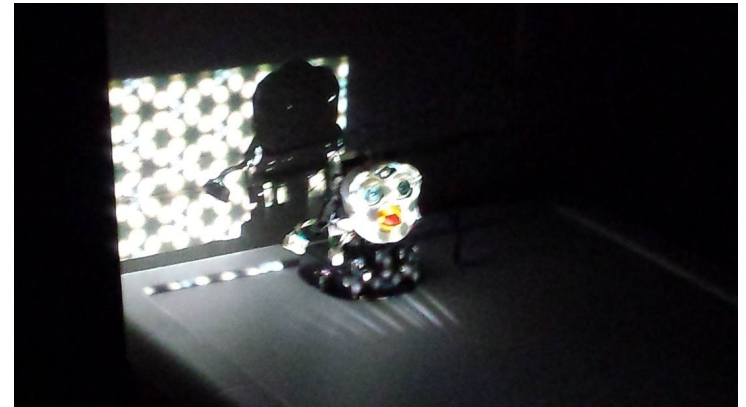
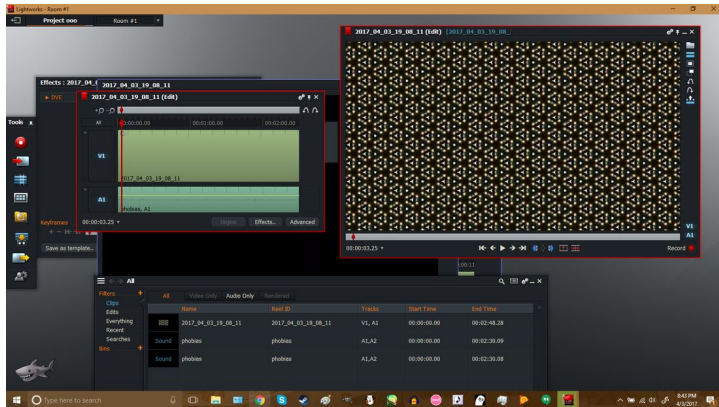


Skills, Techniques & Processes: *Phobics*, continued

Next was creating the visual. For the visual, I used a picture I took of the sunset coming around my neighbor's house with my instant camera because I liked the general colors in the image. Then I put the picture into an app that creates a kaleidoscope of any image you put in, then will automatically animate the kaleidoscope. I recorded the animation using a screen recorder on my phone, then moved it to my computer to compile the whole visual.

To edit the video, I used a free program called Lightworks. First, the video recorded oddly with black bars on the top, so I used the DVE function to zoom it in and make the video take up the whole screen. Next, I cut off the beginning and the end to remove the notifications that came up to tell me I was recording, and cut it shorter to be the same length as my audio. Last, I removed the audio track that recorded in the video and replaced it with my recording of my voice. I exported the file to an MP4.

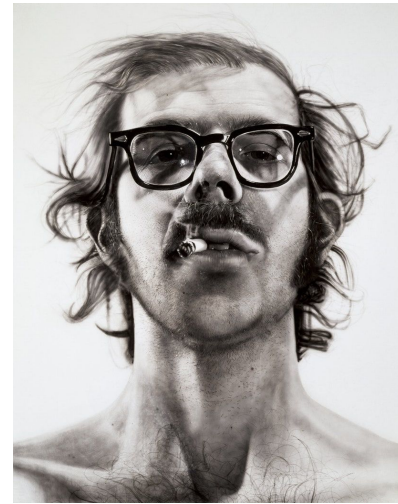
Last was putting the actual piece together. I put the Furby mechanics on a table next to a wall in my basement. Then I put up my projector, which was plugged into my computer, on the table and projected my visual over the mechanics as it moved.



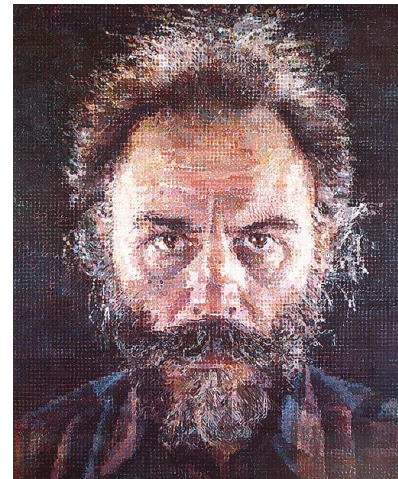
Critical Investigation: Chuck Close

Exasperated is directly inspired by Chuck Close's early and later works. I took inspiration for my black and white palette from *Big Self Portrait*, as well as a general inspiration for a type of facial expression to be present in the piece. His image was taken when he wasn't exactly clean, and the emotion on his face is not a traditional solemnness of self portraits or the smiles of modern, everyday images. *Lucas I* inspired the method of my piece. Both use his signature grid method, however *Lucas I* uses much larger squares to create an abstract impressionist piece. I took inspiration from both in terms of framing, only showing the shoulders up in the piece, and the focus on details of the face and surrounding features. Having an entire body could take away from the face itself, which was his focus in his pieces.

The grid method itself is pretty self explanatory. A grid was created on the original image, and a grid was created on a canvas. Each square on the image translates to a square on the canvas, re-creating the image larger than before, often large enough to cover an entire wall. That was the goal of his earlier works, to flawlessly reproduce an image taken on a large-format camera into something much larger. Later on, when his work steered into a more abstract zone after losing the ability to move his hands quite so meticulously, there was more of a goal to visually break down the human face than ever before. Each square has a few colors dabbed on together to reproduce the general facial features and shape without being photorealistic like his earlier works. However, both forms of his work are still highly detailed take months to years to complete to his standards.



Chuck Close
/ Big
Self-Portrait /
1967-1968 /
Acrylic on
canvas /
Walker Art
Center,
Minneapolis,
Minnesota

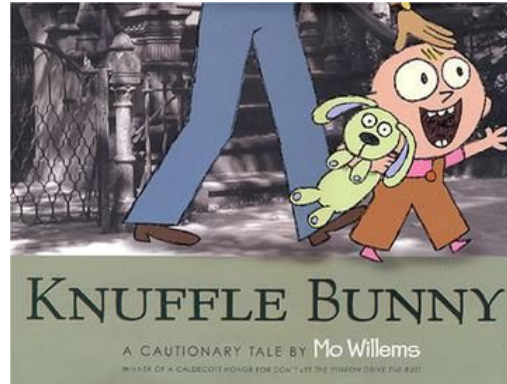


Chuck Close /
Lucas I /
1986-1987 /
Oil and
graphite on
canvas /
Metropolitan
Museum of
Art, New York,
New York

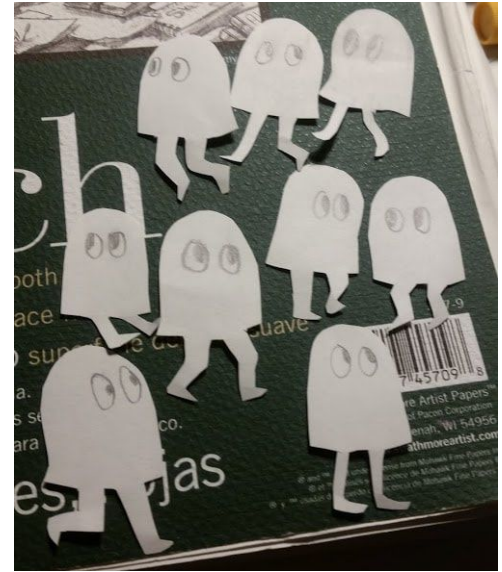
Reviewing, Refining & Reflecting: *Presence*

Overall, I really like the result of *Presence*. It's by far the cutest thing I've made and it feels wonderful. It was refreshing to work on something that's less heavy than some of my other pieces and focus on the idea of imagination. I used this project to try and use my imagination a bit more too, which is something I feel I've lost over the years. I'm now overly critical of everything I draw and make, so to create something more simple and childish was rewarding. I couldn't bring myself to harshly criticize my little ghost creatures because they're like my little children. However, I feel like this piece would benefit from being a series of sorts. I want to go out and take more pictures of various places around my area, making sure to use a tripod to avoid the overly blurred images like that I had taken prior and come up with more creatures to put into those scenes. I'd like to find a variety of places, and if I were to start this project over, I would've found some places with more meaning to myself specifically. The playground in the image is in a completely different part of town from where I lived, but limitations on when I could have my photos developed led me to take photos close to the camera shop rather than close to home.

My piece is similar to *Knuffle Bunny* in many obvious ways. We both used editing software to put our characters into a photograph, which we both scanned. Both of our background photos are also in black and white. However, his character are people, who are in color and fully illustrated. My ghost creatures are not in color, nor are they full illustrations. They are cut out pieces of paper, with the only drawn on aspects being the eyes. His characters have outlines and all of the basic features to the human face and body. His work is also obviously a picture book, sequential and meant to tell a story. My piece is a single image without any story to it other than the one viewers may extract from it.



Mo Willems / *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale* / 2004

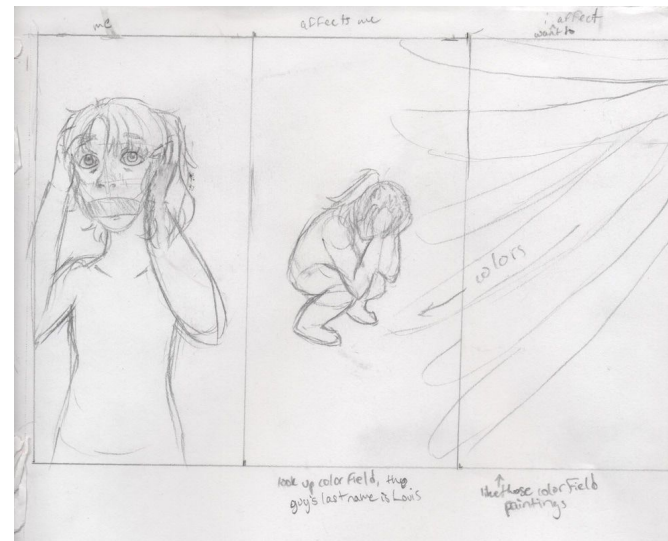


Communication of Ideas: *How I Feel*

This planning sketch on the right was the first that I made for this piece, and I liked it immediately after completing it. The sketch was put together strategically, measured out to have the same ratio of width to height as the canvases would have. I put a lot of detail into the first sketch, more than I possibly needed to, but it's definitely why I felt confident in this concept.

This set of sketches on the left was made to experiment with different ways that I could use the "mouth forced shut" motif I was going for. I tried specifically for the look of melting lips or mouth in the top right, but it didn't work out. In fact, none of these sketches worked out for the final piece. I dropped the taped mouth idea, the hands over mouth was a bad idea, and just having a shut mouth didn't really express the emotions I needed to be in the piece.

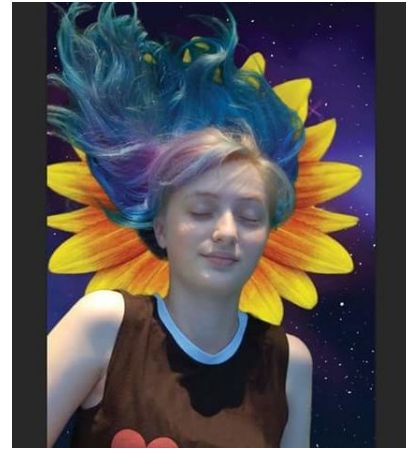
This sketch on the right is more like a mockup than a sketch. It's generally the same as the first, with specific measurements to create the same ratios again. This mockup was drawn on bristol paper to work well with my alcohol markers, instead of using sketch paper that would allow it to bleed and blur. Drawing this was extremely helpful in the painting process, being able to look at the way the color would interact and how far it should bleed into the other canvas.



Reviewing & Refining: *Spacing Out*



While in the process of this project, I had a few different ideas for what I wanted to do. I considered covering my eyes with two flowers early on, reminiscent of a photo my mother took of me when I was younger. I found, however, that that idea works a lot better when you have the physical flowers on your eyes than digitally adding them. I had no "normal" shaped flowers at my disposal beside sunflowers, which are way too big to be putting on my face and get the right effect.



I then came up with the idea to place the flower behind my head, in a way similar to the way halos are depicted in paintings. This was the idea I ended up going with, but it now reminds me more of a pillow.

But before making my final decision, I experimented with other possibilities. While I was working on the project, I was getting tired of staring at my own face for hours. So I put the flower in front of my face, and I still like the look of it, maybe even better than my final result. However, themes of shame and hiding weren't a part of the feeling I wanted to go for. I wanted to make something more calm and pensive.

Around this time, I was also deciding whether I wanted myself within the piece to be upside-down or right side-up. I also considered the idea of creating myself a little bed of flowers, which I admittedly spent too much time on and was kind of ugly.



Critical Investigation: Bill Lemke

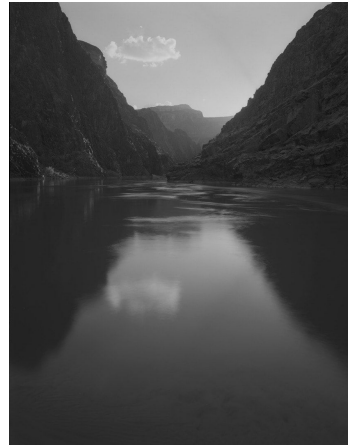
Bill Lemke is a Milwaukee area black and white medium-format film photographer. I took inspiration from his numerous landscape and Grand Canyon photos, all of which are silver gelatin prints. He uses 4 inch by 5 in and 8 inch by 10 inch camera to take his images, and are developed and mounted by himself. He writes himself that he chooses black and white photography because "it encourages and me to and the viewer to concentrate on texture, tonality and the emotional qualities of light." He uses his mentor Ansel Adams' exposure and development techniques for every photograph. He hopes that his photographs will inspire an "appreciation of nature," and a "desire to preserve and protect our environment," which is something I can relate to.



William Lemke /
Arched Trees /
Silver Gelatin
Print / Racine
Art Museum,
Racine,
Wisconsin



William Lemke / Sunflowers & Clouds /
2013 / Silver Gelatin Print



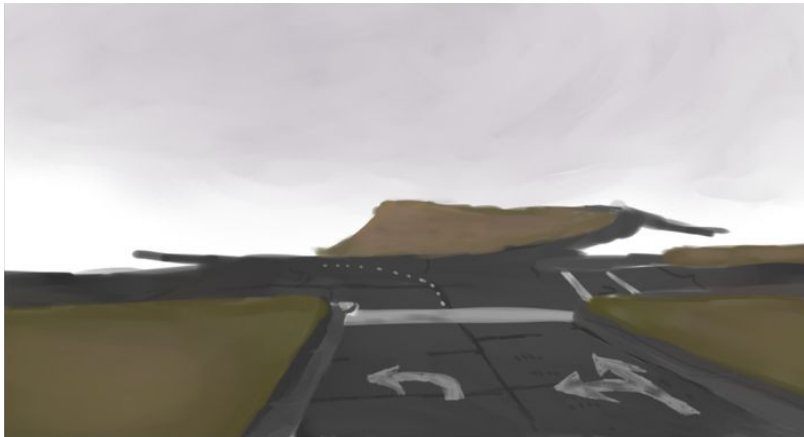
William Lemke / Untitled / 2013 /
Silver Gelatin Print

Most of his images, such as the ones I selected here are very imposing and strong, with a feeling of power to the nature captured in the image. He travels around the country to take his shots, and it shows, as each one has its own unique feeling to it. Yet, each has their own unique feeling of power. In *Untitled*, there is a strong contrast between the sky and the cliffs which are reflected into the water, which takes up more space in the picture, making them very dominant. The *Arched Trees* is less imposing, with a one-point perspective that travels far back into the unknown. It has less contrast than other images, giving it a calmer feeling. *Sunflowers & Clouds* has a large amount of contrast between textures, between the sea of sunflowers and the fluffy clouds which take up much more of the composition. Ultimately, I drew most inspiration from *Arched Trees* and its peaceful feeling, but all of these images make use of the idea that the image may stretch on forever, having no clear ending point to any of the subjects.

Skills, Techniques & Processes: *Lilac Evening*

The first step to re-creating the moment I witnessed that inspired this piece was finding a picture of the place I was. This is an image from Google Street View, because it is coming off of an entrance ramp. I couldn't exactly go out there with a camera or I'd get hit by a car. I considered using a different spot in my area, but I especially loved this spot and it's strange mildly asymmetrical balance.

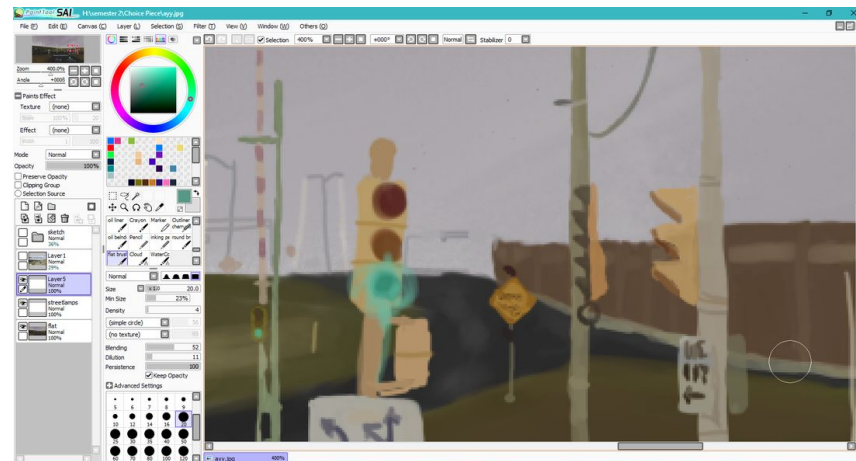
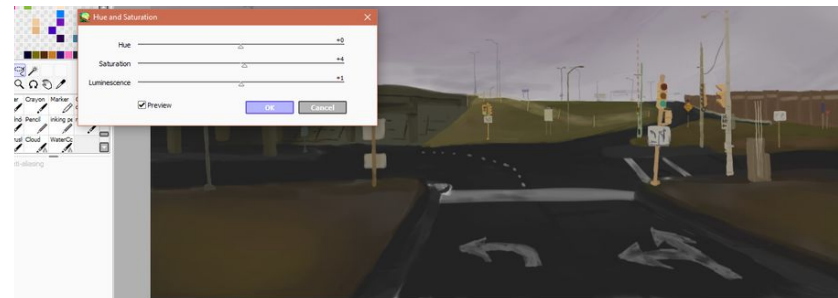
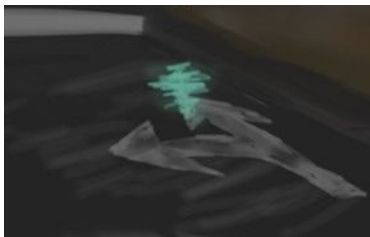
Most of this piece was put together with a custom flat brush tool. It was nice because I liked the base shape, and then there are different settings in this program that allows me to change how it works. For example, there was a blending slider. When I felt it wasn't blending enough, I'd crank that up more, and the dilution slider sometimes too. However, those settings also tended to push the paint around, and if I had that issue, I'd take them down more. Another issue I tended to have while I worked was that I would try to layer a light color on top of a darker color, and the color just wouldn't show up. This was when I would turn the density setting up to maximum, and lower the dilution and blending.



Skills, Techniques & Processes: *Lilac Evening*, continued

After putting together all of the major forms in the piece, I realized that I didn't do a great job of making it look dark, the way a cloudy evening actually looks. I decided to flatten all of the layers which were a part of the piece and save a new file. Then, I opened up the different filtering tools. I used both the "Hue and Saturation" and the "Brightness and Contrast" options. Unfortunately, flattening the layers was the only way I could edit all of the parts at once. So I messed around with it, taking the hue in a bit more of a purply direction, bringing up the saturation a bit, etc. I also made it a point to bring up the color depth and bring out the hiding lilac. I brought down the luminescence to bring in the more drab feeling brought by gray clouds.

The last major detail to this piece was, of course, the lights and reflections in the wet road. I purposely left this for last so the lights could stand out more, being a bit more electric than the colors of the landscape and not be affected by the color balancing. I first went over bit of color already there with a brighter hue, then turned down the density up brought up the dilution to make it wispiers. Then the reflections of the light in the street were made, with the density up a bit higher, and the colors softened with the eraser tool at a lower density.



Critical Investigation: Jean Tinguely and Andy Goldsworthy

For *For The Beauty of the Earth*, I was largely inspired by *Homage to New York* by Jean Tinguely. The piece was a self destroying sculpture, made of various found parts and pieces, from bottles to questionable generators. When it was started, it flew apart, set on fire, and random notes could be heard playing from the burning piano. The whole point of the piece was essentially to create a show for the onlookers, with only video, photos, leftover bits, and the viewers' memories left behind. It connects to my own, by also being destroyed. His piece destroys itself, whereas mine only does by extension. It is made of things from the earth, which was in turn destroyed by myself, another thing from the earth. Tinguely's work in general is about overproduction of material goods.

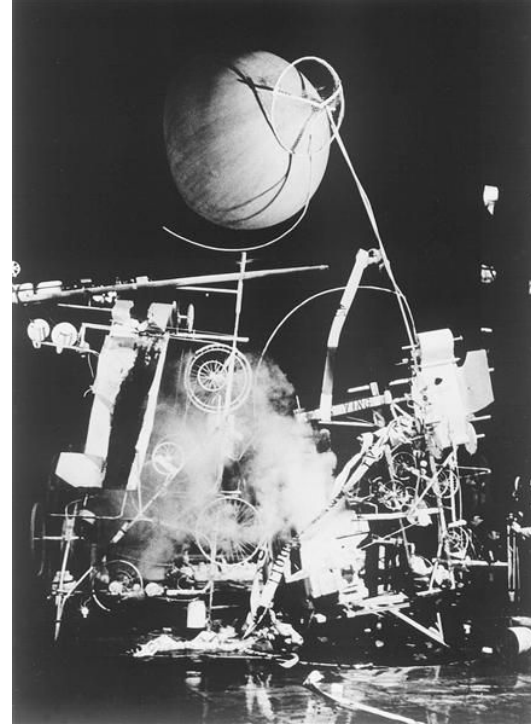
Another inspiration for this project was Andy Goldsworthy. Goldsworthy uses natural materials to make much of his work, in the same way I used flowers and wood. He painstakingly selects the right items to make ephemeral patterns that natural processes such as rotting, wind, and weather eventually destroy. My main draw from his work is the use of flowers and other natural materials he uses to create his work, and his beautiful photographs taken before it is gone. His work as a whole is about the beauty of nature and it's impermanence.



Andy Goldsworthy /
Ice Arch / 1982 / Ice



Andy Goldsworthy /
Dandelion Hole / 1987 /
Dandelions and grass



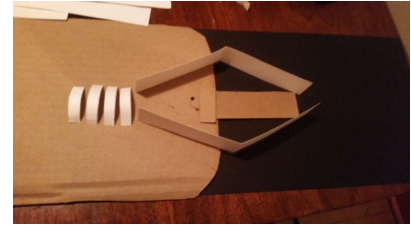
Jean Tinguely / *Homage to New York* / 1960 / *Junk* / Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York

Communication of Ideas: *Path to the Water*

As planning for this project, I did mock-ups of the model rather than sketches. I tried a variety of ideas, all the while trying to keep the feeling that moving through these spaces would create.

The first model, the one in the top left, I did as a bit of a warm-up, and thought about how moving from an open space to a more narrow area would feel, and the resulting cut off view of the lake. In the top right, I was trying to create a feeling of grandeur, where you walk into this large space but it still feels like a room. There is only the top of an arc for a ceiling, but it all would come together and feel like a space. The second from the top on the left was an attempt at being kind of annoying. There is an incomplete arch to signify where to walk in, and all you see is a wall in front of you and walls keeping you in. Each wall hides the one after it, blocking your view to the lake, making it almost rewarding once you finally reach the lakefront. On the right, second from the top, I was trying to go for the opposite feeling of the first, where you're trapped in a small space with a short ceiling to get through, which eventually opens up into an open spot where you can enjoy the lake.

Next, in the image second from the bottom left, I wanted to create a path leading to this space that is in and over the water, the pier sticking out far and creating a room in the shallows. Second from the bottom on the right is similar to one of the others where it starts with a small space, but with quicker gratification as you enter this strange room over and in the water, with a pier to the end of the room where you can see the lake uninterrupted. On the bottom left is a space with two paths, which are still separated up to the water, so there can be two separate sole experiences by the water. Last is an attempt to capture a chunk of lake, just to be a part of the experience that the person can experience.



Reviewing, Refining & Reflecting: *Flora*



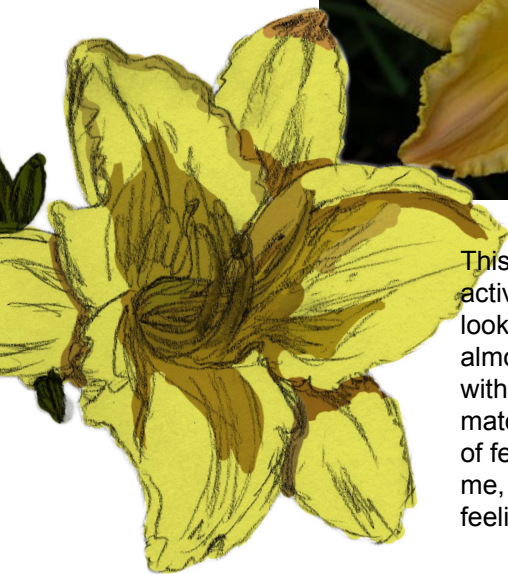
For the image of this flower, these are the alternate shots I took that weren't too blurry. They all have a relatively similar angling, but the framing between each of these and the final image isn't. The right-most image is the most obviously different, with no cut off parts of the flower. The left-most image has more of the bottom petals cropped off, whereas my final image has more of the top petals cut off. The image was too top heavy, making it unappealing. The middle image was taken at a slightly different angle, creating a thinner subject that didn't fill up the frame as much as I wanted. I wanted the image to be mainly filled with the subject, making it comparable to a sun or a star. The right-most image also suffered from the same flaw: the image has more background than foreground, losing the quality I was going for.



These two images were taken to see how the general texture of the image would change, depending on how zoomed in the subject was. The left image definitely created a different texture, but the actual image itself wasn't terribly interesting. It also has a few stray violet flowers, disrupting the homogeneity I was trying to capture. The right image is much closer than my final image, but the foreground of the image is unclear, and the inconsistent focus made the image look unclear.

Reviewing, Refining & Reflecting: *Flora*, continued

These three images of this lily are all essentially identical: nearly face-on to the flower, the blossom is in the dead center of the image, the top and bottom center petals are cut off by the end of frame. Of course, they're all slightly different somehow, in ways that are so slight that aren't worth discussing. While I was taking these images, I noticed how boring the framing of these were. Then, I decided to change my angle to less of a stock image, which created a whole new look at framing this flower. In a sense, the experimentation was the final image I took of this flower. Changing this angle created a brighter feeling, and almost creates a head, looking up and into the distance behind the viewer.



This last image was part of my attempt to create my final, in that I actively tried a new camera angle. I wanted to create the feeling of looking straight down at these plants and this bumble bee, which is almost reminiscent of looking down from a high building at a city below, with the stalks of flowers being other tall buildings. However, it didn't match with my other wider-shot image, in that it didn't create any kind of feeling of an unending flower patch. That idea was very important to me, and the mulch found in the background of the image destroys that feeling.



Critical Investigation: Tony Oursler

Phobics was inspired by *MMPI (Self Portrait in Yellow)* by Tony Oursler with direct connections in the use of a projector and strange audio, and thematic connections. His piece is creepy and unnerving, creating what some call "psychological tension". In mine, I hoped to create a similar feeling. *MMPI...* is not only creepy because it is a doll with a projected face pinned under a chair, but also because the face talks. The projection is of the artist answering questions from the MMPI, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, which was a test for mental disorders that was used in the 1950's. He answers these questions, but no one is there to ask him the questions, making it even more unnerving if you aren't aware of what is going on. He's also answering these questions with a relatively stoic face and in a very flat, monotone voice, as if with no emotion. The whole piece is not only creepy, but it also comments on mental health and how it can affect people. The connection to mental health is what led me to involve phobias in my piece. One of my friends has a severe case of arachnophobia, and watching them deal with it led me to choose it, as well as phobias in general not being a seriously represented form of mental disorder.



Tony Oursler /
MMPI (Self
Portrait in Yellow)
/ 1996 / Video
installation with
projector, VCR,
VHS tape, cloth
doll, and metal
folding chair /
Milwaukee Art
Museum,
Milwaukee,
Wisconsin



Communication of Ideas: *Spaced Out*



This sketch was the first idea I came up with, where my eyes would be covered with flowers and give a sense of anonymity. I experimented with this idea, but I eventually grew to dislike it. In this stage, I was also planning to make my hair transparent, and place an image inside the empty space, like a sunset or my illustration of the stars. Doing this and making it look good proved to be very, very difficult, so the idea was scrapped.



This is less of a sketch and more of an illustration expanding on what I wanted to do. It was around the time of doing this that I realized how irritating having to meticulously cut out my hair would be, so I drew it to think about what maybe needed to be changed. I had had no idea what I would wear at this point, and drawing this led me to start looking into what I could wear that would contribute to the piece.



This is the sketch that I created when I was reconsidering almost everything about my project. It had new flower positioning and hair still there, and was around the time I was still thinking about what could be around me. I considered maybe my animals, or people who meant a lot to me, but that just seemed really overplayed and cheesy. So the sketch simply ended in a blank, void-like space, just like the others.

This is the sketch that I made when I began to play around with possibly flipping my image. I even considered combining some ideas and having myself there twice, one right side up and the other upside down, one with the flower behind and one with the flower in front. I also took a few pictures of the tree outside my house, to go along with the "hanging" idea, but I was worried someone might take it a bit differently.



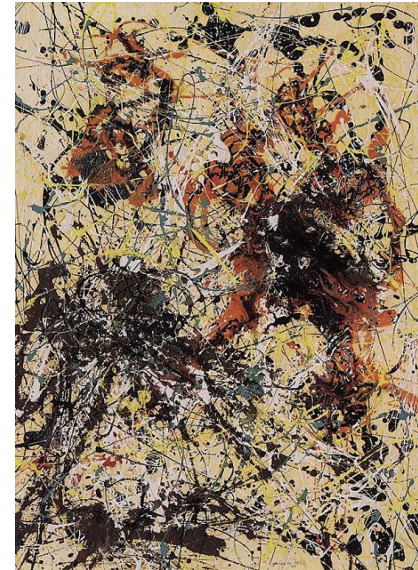
Reviewing, Refining & Reflecting:

Overall I feel like *Stomp* was very successful. I was concerned while working on it that the boot prints wouldn't be very obvious, since I had to make a pretty solid base layer of blue. However, the red that went over it and the yellow on top of that made it incredibly obvious that the entire piece was boot marks. Unfortunately it's not terribly visible in photos of the whole piece, but the dirt clumps also make very effective texture on the piece which gets across the idea that the boots were dirty in the process of creating the piece. However, I am worried that the colors I used were too bright and basic, as I used the colors straight out of the tube. I tried to pick slightly different shades of the primary colors, but I feel like only the blue looked unusual, but this was because the blue also was directly on the wood and it was tinted due to that. It would've been even worse if I used primer on the board beforehand like I had planned. I sometimes wonder what it would've been like if I mixed up a variety of colors and didn't just work in a triad like Pollock, but I also feel like that'd be much riskier and that I could've put together colors that just don't work together.

As previously mentioned, this piece is inspired by Jackson Pollock's work, specifically *Number 12* and *Number 17*. *Number 12* is on fiberboard, which is why *Stomp* is. However, unlike my piece, they both have a considerable amount of board showing through, whereas I made an effort to cover most of it but still letting a bit show through. I have the layering of a few colors the way his pieces do, however my colors are very solid and unmixed, whereas his are very unique and mixed paints. I used only three hues, the way he does in *Number 17*, but *Number 12* has many colors all layered upon each other. We also differed in terms of technique: Pollock used his signature drip method, whereas I applied my boots coated in paint to the board. This came with a large elemental difference: my boots did not make line, unlike his drips. However, the idea of movement and abstract expressionism is key to both of our pieces as forms of self expression of difficult emotions.



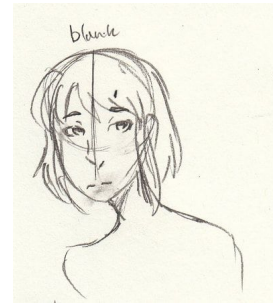
Jackson Pollock / *Number 17* / 1949 / Enamel and aluminum paint on paper on fiberboard



Jackson Pollock / *Number 12* / 1949 / Oil on paper on masonite

Communication of Ideas: *Exasperated*

While planning this project, I mainly focused on the potential facial expressions I could be making. I sketched some up, based on how I was feeling at the time. I then used those as references for facial expressions while I was taking photos of myself. One never quite translated, where I was intending to look sad & upset. However, I never figured out how to make myself cry, so I just tried to look dismayed. I intentionally took these in the morning, after laying down for a while to make my hair a little bit messy, and didn't take a shower prior so that my hair looked a bit greasy. I also consistently have eye bags that are kind of puffy, which added to the "just finished crying" kind of look. I also took many other photos, but many of them are blurry or framed in a way that was not conducive to this piece. Taking pictures and not being able to see what I was doing or check if I was in focus was difficult, as I had no one to help me take the photos, nor did I want anyone else taking them. I also wanted to have non-"selfie" framing, so I used a DSLR set up on a tripod to avoid any angles other than something straight on.



Critical Investigation: Cindy Sherman and Morris Louis

The first panel of *How I Feel* is largely inspired by the look of many of Cindy Sherman's photographs. For one, they're obviously both black and white, and it's used to create the strong differences in shade and make a piece with a dramatic feel. There is also influence in the way I framed the image in the first panel. The angle in Sherman's *Still from an Untitled Film* is unusual, slightly shot from below, with a framing that comes with it that implies that the woman has walked into the shot and hasn't been posed for it. Similarly, the figure in the first panel of my piece is framed strangely, with an arm extending off canvas and eyes looking at something unknown off in the distance in the same way Sherman's does. However, my piece doesn't take any inspiration from her *Stills* series thematically.

The colored sections of my piece are directly inspired by the piece *Where* by Morris Louis, among other color field pieces by the same artist. I especially like this one because all of the colors are unusual shades of the colors used, which I also made an effort to do. His piece also has a bit of a feeling of movement from bottom to top, and I took that same goal, just from right to left. I feel like his pieces like this look like a visual representation of some sort of happy emotion, which I wanted to incorporate into my piece, moving into a happy feeling.



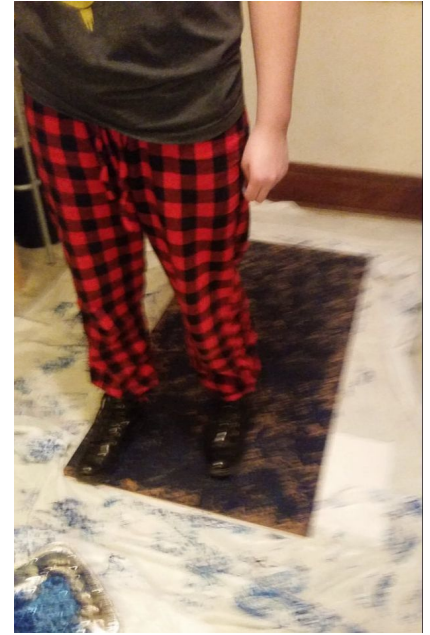
Cindy Sherman / Still from an Untitled Film / 1978 / Silver gelatin print / Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York



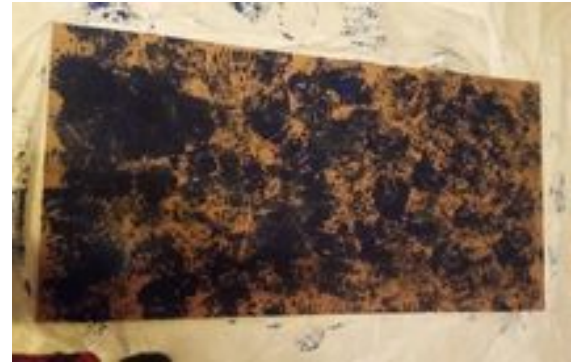
Morris Louis / Where / 1960 / Acrylic on canvas / Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.

Skills, Techniques & Processes: *Stomp*

I started out with my fiberboard, after doing my test swatch, laying it on the floor under some cut up garbage bags to avoid getting paint all over the floor. I took a plastic cup and went outside to my yard and scooped up some dirt to mix with the paint. Then I poured some into the foil pan, along with some paint, and mixed it together.



After that, I put my feet into the pan lightly, and then I stepped on the board. I walked around the board in various directions to give it a variety of movement. When I was laying down the first layer, the blue, I made sure to cover most of the board, but not entirely and have some peek through.



Skills, Techniques & Processes: *Stomp* continued

I did the same thing again, but this time with red. Paint, dirt, mix, step. This time however, I made an effort to not cover over the blue too much. I wanted it to be about half and half, and still show some board through the layers of paint. I also made more of an effort to have some chunky texture from the dirt, since this was going to be on a more outer layer and the lighter hue would be more likely to show the texture in the first place.

Between each color, I washed out the soles of my boots so as to avoid any major color mixing. A little bit was fine, but I wanted any mixture to come from the layers and on the board itself. Last was to just add the yellow layer.

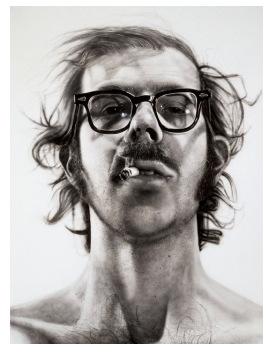
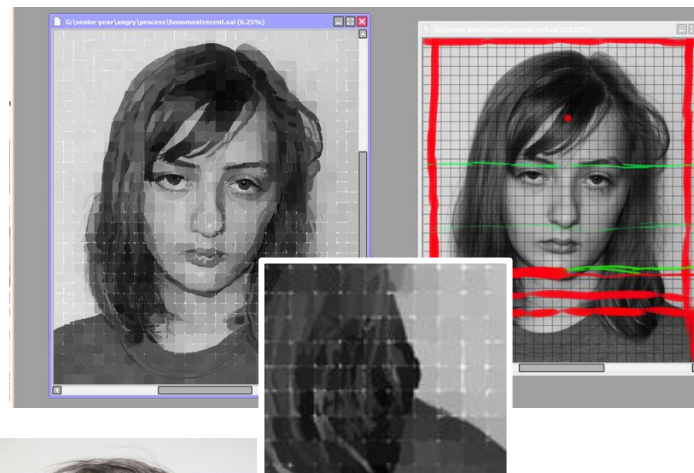
I tried to be very conservative with how much yellow I was adding to the piece. I didn't want the yellow to overtake the piece, which would be easy since it was the topmost layer, but I still wanted the yellow to have a large presence. It was a lot brighter than the red and the blue, which I felt like tied the piece together to represent the different aspects of anger and frustration.



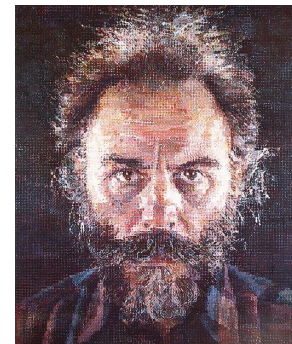
Reviewing, Refining & Reflecting: *Exasperated*

Overall I'm very satisfied with how this piece came out. I wanted to do something with a nice, simple concept which was easy to deal with, yet have a piece that is technically impressive. This piece was extremely tedious, having to deal with over one thousand squares, which was terrifying but feels satisfying that it is finished. However, I did have a few issues. My largest one was deciding how much texture each square should receive, especially when putting together my hair. Some sections are mainly very small textures, with tiny shades and highlights, but it's an unreasonable level to consider adding to relatively abstract piece. So there was some squares that had a bit due to large ranges of values, and some are just one shade, which can make some of them look out of place. I also had an issue with deciding how much space there should be between each square. Some had a bit of white space, and some had none, but it was so tedious I wasn't able to pay it that much attention. I would go back and redo some of the sections, or start the entire piece over if I had the time using the knowledge I gained while working on it.

My piece is inspired by both eras of Chuck Close's work. I specifically liked the black and white palette of his early work, and the abstraction of the older work. My piece is obviously different from *Big Self Portrait* in that my piece is less detailed and not realism. However, I went for the kind of facial expression found in it and other similar pieces, which is unpolished and unsmiling. I explicitly wanted to include the things on my face that bother me, like my eyelid which folds over, in similar way to Close's unshaven face. My piece is also clearly different from *Lucas I* in multiple ways. One is that it is not colorful like that piece. Another is that it is more abstract than mine, with many more and smaller squares. Both of these pieces are also a lot larger than mine, which are around the size of a wall. Mine is not that large, due to material limitations. I also didn't use the same medium as him. My piece is a digital painting, and his are acrylic, one applied with a brush and the other applied with an airbrush.



Chuck Close / Big Self-Portrait / 1967-1968 / Acrylic on canvas / Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota



Chuck Close / Lucas I / 1986-1987 / Oil and graphite on canvas / Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York

Expanding Critical Investigation - Gallery Visits

Hal Koenig

Hal Koenig was an artist who I was very interested in when I saw his work. His paintings are all oil, and clearly impressionist inspired. I enjoyed his work because it gave me a new lense on the city. Milwaukee isn't the prettiest around, especially the downtown area. But his combination of iconic buildings and the beautiful scenery of the places from which you can see said buildings in the distance. The almost fauvist colors give Milwaukee a look of vibrancy, and almost makes you forget how awful and ugly cities can be.



Thomas Shea

Thomas Shea's work was really intriguing to me. All of the oil paintings he was showing were of people in a museum, looking at paintings and other art. Looking at it almost made me a little bit uncomfortable, as if they were making fun of me somehow, and the irony of looking at paintings of people looking at paintings wasn't lost on me. Beside that, these are like studies on how each person exists. How they stand, what they may have, how they hold things, all while not paying attention to how they may look. None of the paintings show their faces either, giving each individual person a sense of anonymity even if defining details are there.



Expanding Critical Investigation - Gallery Visits

Bill Lemke

Bill Lemke is a photographer, and his photographs were some of my favorite I saw during the Milwaukee Gallery Night and Day. His photos are traditional silver gelatin prints, which I thought were incredible. The process involves silver suspended in gelatin, black and white film, etc. In a world dominated by digital works and photography, seeing the rich tones that can be produced by this process makes me happy. Not only the process, but the composition of his shots are incredible. I later used his photography as inspiration for *Quiet*.



Alison Hiltner

I went and visited the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and while I was there I saw this local artist installation. Hiltner's piece is basically a simplified ecosystem, focused on the symbiosis between humans and algae. There is a strange mouthpiece attached to the wall, with instructions to blow into it. The CO₂ that is put into the mouthpiece travels into the bags of algae which transform it into oxygen, bubbling all the while. The whole piece is very alien, and walking around in there feels like you're in some strange lab and some sort of creature may rise from the algae and tear out of the bag.

