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Scholarship Visual Arts 2024

93306 Painting

TOP SCHOLAR





What makes a person truly a person? Our personalities, sure, but sometimes it feels like how we present physically really impacts who we are as a person- what we feel, our identities. I wanted to build my folio around the theme of "body horror"- not twisting, mangled forms, but the existential horror of living in a body. Or maybe horror isn't the right word- more the indifference and confusion that comes with a physical form. I've always felt detached from my body, feeling as if I exist solely in my mind. The mind and body are, to me, entirely separate things, and our bodies are just vehicles we need to occupy in order to survive.

PROPOSAL

This concept was what led me to creating my portfolio as a study on figure and portraiture. It fascinates me to see the faces of people I know coming through as I paint them, and I wanted to see how it would feel to watch myself appear on my canvas. If I could paint myself, maybe I would feel a closer connection to my physical self. I want my work to reflect the detachment that one can feel between their consciousness and the physical form, but simultaneously to connect the concept of a "body" to our minds that exist within them. It's a hard concept to put into words, so I looked to art to help me communicate this.

I'm fascinated with the small pieces of the human figure that really define us- faces, hands and limbs which if not painted accurately can lead to an uncanny, inhuman look. I want to see if my paintings can really look like a person- to recognise something as human, do our brains need to know that it is alive and breathing? Starting with portraiture, I'd like to work on self portraits as a neutral base to my portfolio. I will set up the base idea of themes around self and the human form before I move into figurative works. I'm planning on bringing reflection into the work, in an attempt to visually describe the separation between the mind and body- the reflections will have a will of their own. I want to push myself this year, to experiment with things I've been too scared to try before. I'm going to work with oils for a portion of my folios, rather than acrylics which are my more comfortable medium. I want my works to make people feel slightly unnerved, and question why they feel this way. Painting is just painting, after all- a body on a canvas is just shapes and lines laid down by the artist- there's nothing real there.

In the interest of time, however, I'll be using acrylics for the majority of my portfolio, as they are the medium that I can manipulate to produce the best result.

Panel 1: Subject matter (portraits)
 Panel 2: Bringing in concept of mirror + full figure
 Panel 3: mirror breaks, figure is distorting

When I started with my folio this year, I considered using age and the way our appearances change over time to communicate my idea. However I quickly realised that this somewhat watered down my goal of describing the human form here and now, as it is. I'd like to look into the way that time changes and stretches and crumples human figure, but for this particular folio I'm focusing on the relationships between figure and the consciousness instead, so I decided to stick to self- portraits, since that would make the folio read easier, as well as be more practical to find references.



photo references for a portrait

★ A note to the reader ★

I've tried to colour-code the ideas in my pages, circling similar ideas with similar colours. Just a heads-up.

ARTIST MODELS/INFLUENCES

★ Jenny Saville
 Approaches the female figure in a brutally honest and unashamed way. Distorts + deconstructs- using strong perspectives.



★ Carolyn Anderson
 I love the way that she captures light and the expressions of her subjects with loose, open brushstrokes.

hands interact
 flesh is moulded



flesh & perspective
 Light
 loose, open style

flowy



★ Alla Bartoshchuk
 Real focus on the human form. She combines figures and meshes them together, and her work is dream- like and confusing.

scrapes & swirls

★ Oscar Wilde
 Specifically his novel "The Picture of Dorian Grey". The themes of unchanging youth, obsession with beauty and a painting which reflects your inner self really inspired me. Dorian's external appearance is fully separated from his soul, which appears in the painting. I feel like this is true for everyone, just on a less extreme and external level.



I want my colours to represent that separation- I'll use a contrast of warm, flamelike tines, against cooler purples to accentuate the two different sides of a person- the physical, human form and the internal consciousness.

Plain air painting - a friend of mine

COOPLES OF DOODLES!

The many studies required to understand a medium

watercolour



Small study as commission practice from a photo

Small issue is the drying time - I'm too impatient to wait! I like to work in thick paint layers which complicates things.

Landscape study from a van Gogh painting - I found this loose style interesting but I really struggled with painting a landscape

3 small studies done early on this year - experimenting with art styles + techniques



Good advice: my true enemy! I was very nervous to try but good one but quickly began to struggle. I don't understand them & I could not get this work to come out right. I think I'll leave journal for now

Oils! I LOVE YOU! I learnt how to use oils this year + I use the colours + styles help me achieve what I did about 11 studies before I felt confident to paint the final work. The ones I picked show the most significant points in my learning curve. I did a few studies like this where I used a lot of layers + spent a long time - again, did not enjoy this at all. I wondered if I could better understand my perspective with a paper color palette. This was bad. Maybe my problem was not understanding the focal contrast. This black + white study was okay but still took too long for me to look at.

Acrylics! I love you the most. here's a 10 minute apple study. The constraints helped me paint in the style I love. I'm probably mostly going to use acrylics this year but for fun + a challenge I'll do a few oil pieces!



I did 2 small studies for the end piece in my watercolour series - I was confident!



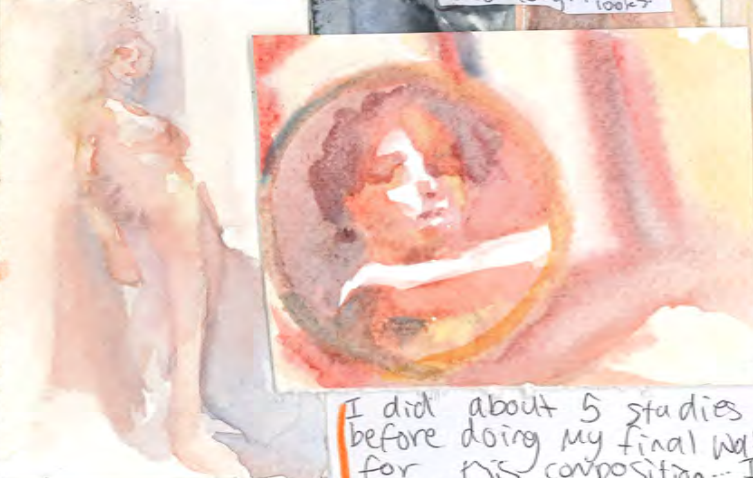
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At this point I asked for help + got told to try working in one layer + time constraint. This really helped!!

Thank goodness for the advice! The time limit was a game changer for me and after this last study I feel confident to move on to my actual final work.



I did about 5 studies before doing my final watercolor for this composition... I mainly re-learned the importance of leaving dry areas for highlights

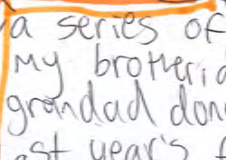
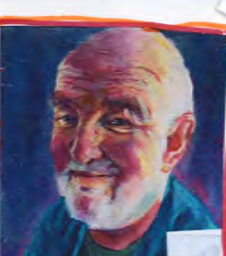
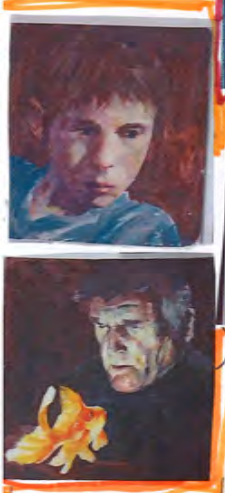
My main tips from what I learnt: leave lots of blank patches for light + use wet into wet and focus on lost + found edges (leg area fades into the background) - paint quickly. Don't suffer! I tried to use no more than 2 layers per watercolour. Heytho is fun!



One thing that really improved my watercolours was setting a time limit so I did the same for charcoal. I want to have at least one charcoal work on my portfolio since I just really like charcoal! I like how these come out especially the very strong contrast one on the far left. I'll definitely use the white highlights + details in other charcoal works. Restricting myself to 10 minutes helps me keep a loose open style.

10 min. for each study.

PREVIOUS PORTRAITS



Portraiture - I hate this! I know I can do better!
A self-portrait focus.

What do I look like?
 I want to see how others see me - can I find out with art?

A commissioned work (I have permission to use) done at the start of this year. I liked the style I'd painted with here and wanted to do something similar this year.

a series of my brother + grandad done for LZ. Last year's folio was about time, aging and memory.

These previous portraits were my first real experience with portraiture + unlocked an interest for painting faces. I was fascinated by the way these faces slowly appeared on my canvases and I wanted to see if I could recognise my own face, so decided to focus on self-portraiture for a portion of my folio, out of interest.



THE PROGRESS OF MY FIRST PROPER SELF - PORTRAIT
 This took a long time. I used oils + enjoyed the blendability but was frustrated by the drying time. I learnt the importance of a good reference - this photo was bad (I was squinting at the sun + the light contrast was not strong enough. I don't like this painting at all - I don't recognise myself. Apparently it looks like me though, so.

POV DRAWINGS + DRAWING FROM LIFE

I've been really interested in life studies + drawings. There's a mirror in the art room and I sit in front of it and sketch myself. I'm doing a painting using this mirror. It's a POV - you can see my hand reaching out.

planning sketch for the painting



This was confusing to do, but interesting to train eyes.

I needed to understand the perspective of a POV drawing. I had a photo of a girl in a red top. Little me idea wise I was still playing with age/sharp.



progress photo - laying out anatomy with a paint sketch.

Rough pencil sketches + quick acrylic portraits using our school mirror. Technically my 1st self portraits.



Finished piece! This was a fun challenge.

George Dawraway blends subjects + has pieces floating away in his paintings. Some of Jimmy Willet's newer portraits include brighter scrapes of colour. This materiality study I did included a mix of charcoal, acrylic gesso & I tried to imitate these artist models.
 - really don't want to continue this kind of work in my folio. I'm not a fan of this intense abstraction without a figure or space. The colours feel too random. This was an interesting study but not something I'm going to continue with personally.



Carolyn Anderson



A study I've done in oils of Carolyn Anderson's work. I love the colours and style she uses especially how loose her brushstrokes are. Sadly the colours don't fit my colour palette but if I

-focus on main subject - surroundings are blurred

-gestural brushstrokes underneath
 -movement - glow - refined faces/
 -light - bright colours disintegration

can move in to a more gestural style I'd really like that.

the painter is visible in their art. No longer a faceless entity - visible brushstrokes
 (Gan Chin Lee)

Artworks that utilize Reflection

Artur Izraylyan



The artist is visible behind the canvas & the art is not just brushstrokes on canvas - we see the artist, it's more personal

ARTIST MODELS!

Pilar Lopez Biaz Study the scrapes + charcoal she uses are really interesting to me I'd like to find a way to include it in my later works, but I'm not sure if it is.

-pov painting
 -old photograph
 -dynamic open composition



MIRRORS and COLOURS



angles

my first piece that included a mirror (+ reference image - I used angles to create a more interesting, slightly triangular composition)

I use this triangle in a lot of works - it comes naturally to some, others I work it in to balance my composition especially during later collages - If I wasn't using a triangular composition triangles became "Shards", following the mirror

work in progress - the intense purple through me off so I'll add in more oranges

Colours are now warmer but still different



Different colours represent duality

my first mirror piece showing duality + "other-world" reflection. A reflection that breaks the 4th wall feels very uncanny.

NOVELS inspire ART!

I've been reading more this year (partly due to taking English school). Some concepts used in the literature I'm studying are very interesting to me. I'm trying to communicate the idea of a body ~~separated~~ from the mind - "body horror" through the disturbing disconnect coming from unrecognisable reflections of oneself when the mind + body is separated or even the idea of duality between the outwards presentation + inwards consciousness.

Art imitates Life x wrong!
Art imitates ART! Wilde was wrong!!



The picture of Dorian Gray + Jekyll + Hyde are novels which address this idea of duality. Tall, handsome Jekyll as known to the world contains within him shrunken, miserable Hyde. Dorian's youthful appearance never changes, but his portrait grows warped - an unfamiliar reflection of his true self. Both of these novels described the concept of duality in a way that really interested me and I realized I could use the idea of duality to represent my concept of "body horror". I'm not going for the idea of any particular focus on appearance (even though I'm doing portraiture), rather, I'm trying to capture the uncanny feeling of separation between inner consciousness + the physical body. As mirrors are symbols of duality + inner consciousness, I decided they would be perfect to aid me in expressing my ideas. So duality in novels has influenced duality in my work.

I realised after bringing mirrors into my folio that I needed to find a way to show the separation between the true "physical world" + the "mirror world". I decided to use colour here. As you can see I've focused on warmer tones for the "real" world and cool tones for the "inner consciousness".

I've found that warm colours send energy + warmth in a painting - but also hostility. This is perfect to represent a real world which is more "there" + vibrant but can feel hostile + separate. The cool colours of the inner world aim to produce a sense of indifference - symbolising the indifference I feel around the idea of a physical form, and the separation will hopefully create an uncanny feeling - the uncanny separation of mind + body.

Bringing it together - multiple mirrors reference separation + duality. Full figure to introduce the human body. Cool tones in the reflector.



Highlighted the shards / masking tape to create sharp broken lines.

nealing panel 3 I've felt as if I'm stuck with the idea of a mirror. I was sick of painting mirrors. I wanted to smash them up! So... that is exactly what I did.

I'm pushing my concept further, as my next shift will involve fragmenting the mirror. I used



Next steps - panel 3 final work's the broken mirrors - let's make warping the forms the human form unrecognisable!

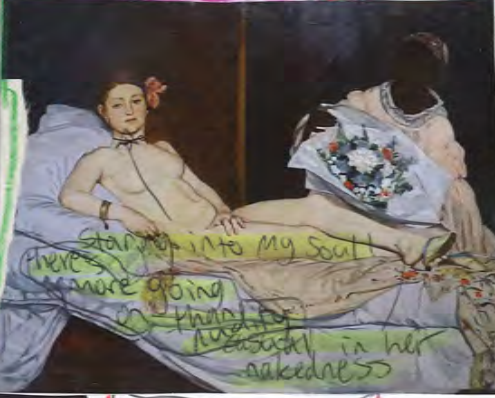
fractal guitar composition stabilizes the work + focuses on the subject



Capoline Venus 2nd century



Demystifying The Female Form

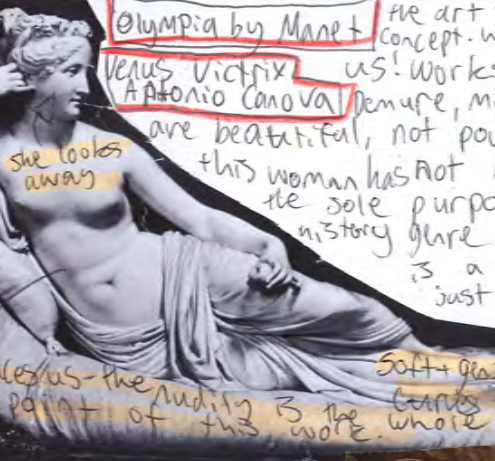


My first focused figure-based series. I took photos in a strong harsh light, posing in angular positions. I pushed the perspective and contrast as much as I could, using a mostly dry-brush, dry technique + "drawing" in my figures with paint. This helped further the concept of angular, distorted and uncanny forms - releasing the human body from its soft curves + bringing in the idea of a slightly unrecognizing figure.



I want these pieces to make people feel slightly uncomfortable.

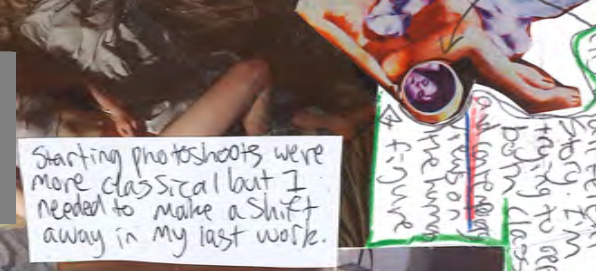
A brief look back... Today's western society places a lot of importance on hiding our bodies and covering up the shame of nakedness. This feels weird to me since we all have bodies. The male figure however feels less sexualized inherently than the female one (men can go topless at the beach for example). Nudity was less taboo in ancient Greece, but the female form was still not seen with neutrality rather it was sexualized. Statues of men were often posed naked, as seen above. Their nakedness does not detract from the message - it's not even the focal point. Men could be naked but still powerful. This statue of the "modest Venus for example - she covers herself so as to not be seen nude. But Venus was the goddess of love and sexuality, so despite her almost shy pose she has still been carved and viewed in an inherently sexualized light - these statues are treated very differently.



Olympia by Manet was highly controversial in the art world. Depicting a woman lying nude on a bed, the subject itself is not an uncommon concept. Women had been painted nude for centuries prior but she is looking at us! Works of art such as Venus Victrix depict the ~~nude~~ naked female form in a demure, mindful and soft way. See how she's looking away, but leaning towards us? Women are beautiful, not powerful. This painting "Olympia" defies traditional norms - the nakedness of this woman has not been placed on a high enough pedestal. The "beautiful" female figure is not the sole purpose of this work. Art Historian Eunice Lipton stated that "Matisse" robbed "read art history glare of nudes from their mythical scaffolding". Many people theorise that this woman, Olympia, is a prostitute. Her cold, accusatory gaze holds us accountable - she is not just a beautiful figure - there is a person inside the body as is the same with everyone. It's no wonder people felt uncomfortable - the idea of women having autonomy + being self aware was not often broached in art.

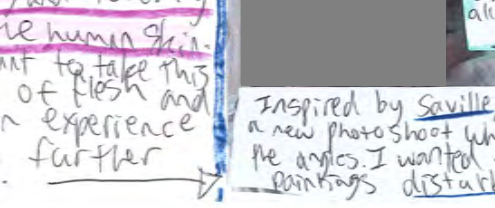
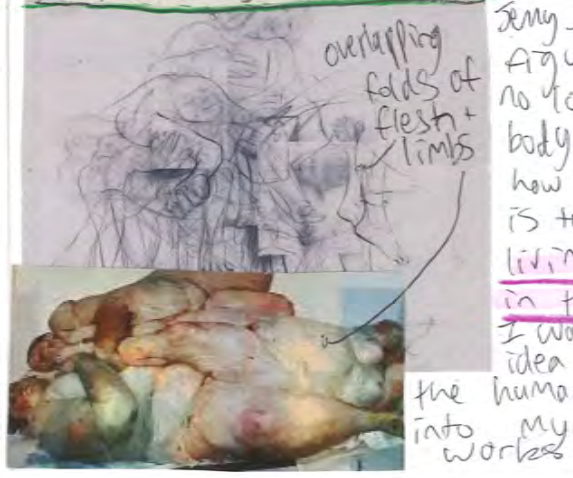
Contemporary Change

Jenny Saville paints the female figure in folds of flesh - no longer sexualizing the body - instead she paints how fascinating it is to be "seeing living and touching in the human skin." I want to take this idea of flesh and the human experience into my further works.



Inspired by Saville, I took a new photoshoot where I pushed the angles. I wanted to make my paintings disturbingly uncomfortable.

In my final work I wanted to try to communicate my frustration with sexualized bodies and become. I pushed the perspective, inspired by Olympia, encouraged me to paint figures that direct eye contact with the viewer. I decided to fragment the forms, to add to the ideas of disturbing separation. I also included two figures to create in the glass. I'm using the female form - I think I'm using it in a way that's not just making it look like a reflection of the body. I'm trying to reference the classical but to a woman on the human figure. I'm inspired by Saville. The painting is a body built out of a shadow. Eye contact - a hand reaching out to pull you in. I also included two figures to create in the glass. I'm using the female form - I think I'm using it in a way that's not just making it look like a reflection of the body. I'm trying to reference the classical but to a woman on the human figure.

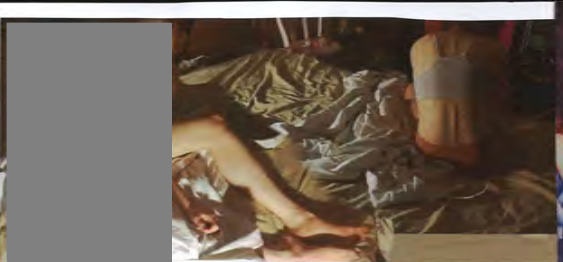


About My ref. colours

I began to paint using black + white reference so I stuck to my colour palette + wasn't influenced by the many colours. This really improved my understanding of tone + colour theory.

COLLAGING

How I do it
I use an app called Ibis paint to collage. My images are different layers + I erase the bits I don't need. I use the app to move my images.



Starting small... My first collage - I just took 2 photos of



This was originally a panorama on panel 2 but it got changed round to p3. My board has been through so much rearranging (in fact - I glued down panel 2... and then ripped apart my boards + rearranged it the panels themselves feel like a collage). Anyway, originally collaged for 1 piece, then I moved the leg along for the second work (as you see in finished piece).

My reflection - one looking away + one looking directly into the camera - and placed them together this was quite quick to do and I thought it produced an uncanny + interesting effect

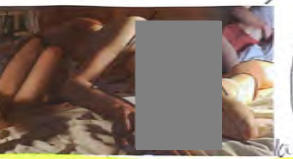
Rushing my work further with Alla Barbosch's work - happy with the result!

I modelled the composition of this piece after my reference. I'm trying to keep works slightly simpler + I really wanted to have another go at a front on portrait in acrylics (since I really disliked the last one). So I'm slightly overlapping the faces to give the illusion of space.

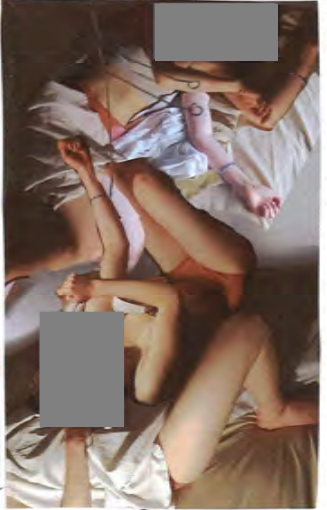
The process of composition I like to keep a triangular composition in the forefront of my mind, this one took a while...

using Tai-Shan Schierenbroeg's art

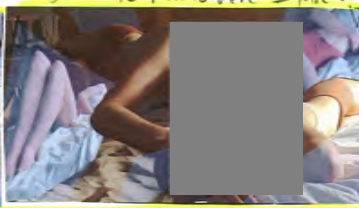
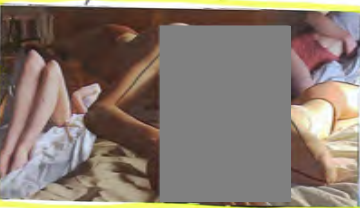
second try, happier but I wanted to add more warping + stuff



realised I can add a drawing layer to plan work + the...



Final composition



original concept - unhappy w/ the figure (too busy)

I wanted the figure to be more angular + strange. trying to keep the triangles in the composition so I'm inconsistent throughout.

Final piece - I fragmented the mirror + I am happy with what I've done.



My collage composition (swimmer as my artist + model) - she uses flowy + feminine forms and expresses the female figure in a refreshingly non-sexualised way. She melds forms + mixes them together so I decided to base my next works composition off this method. I did a photoshoot (thanks for the help mum) and collaged those photos together using Ibis paint. I decided to take some photos using an orange yellow lamp + so the colour changes are still present. I really struggled with painting fabric - it's a new thing for me + I really love to work on it.

WHAT NEXT? (MORE DISTORTION!) DECONSTRUCTED REALISM!

I've really enjoyed pushing myself this year, especially when it came to painting in a slightly more distinct style/painting fabrics + figures on a space. The next step for me, I feel, would be to explore the idea of distortion further on "panel 4." I think that warping bodies + painting using a looser style + more fragmentation will really help me communicate my concept of the strangeness, complexity and confusion of the human form.

I feel like I started to lean into a more "traditional" painting style ~~the~~ making my folio (slightly more realistic - especially the fabric) and as I progress into a 4th panel, I would look at developing a new style. As the mirrors break + fragment in my final piece, I would like to look at figure doing the same thing. I really enjoy looking at "unfinished" style art - so leaving sections of canvas blank or sketched over, scraping away paint and manipulating limbs + flesh to bend would be really interesting to look at further. Calling back to Jenny Saville + Pilar Lopez Bilde - scraping paint over figures + drawing back into an in age would be interesting to me. A really interesting next step would be working with sculpture. I'm super into these clay "sketches" of his works Antonio Canova would do when planning his statues. The sketchy, patchy clay seems to me like a natural next step in breaking apart a human form. I want to portray fresh overlapping, interacting with itself and in creating turns & sections that could be a sculpture.



My first series - a focus on the changes of age, opposed to my current concept of simply how strange the human body is.

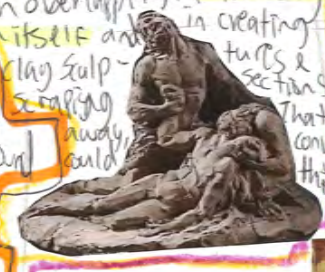
At the start of the year I began exploring my idea of an undulating human form through age, looking at the way a person can become unrecognizable yet still retain traces of themselves through time. I really want to pursue this concept further but currently I feel like it would have been too much information to effectively bring in my folio. If I could extend Carravaggio - chiaroscuro, light, and people (paintings in the Baroque period) I really want to work into my paintings a stronger focus on light. I love the way a strong chiaroscuro can portray a figure + I think the way that the human body is highlighted by different lights is fascinating. I want to use a stronger contrast in my works, capturing the human figures forms as if they are coming out of the darkness.

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I experimented with this in later works but really starting to bring in some kind of environment - walls + rooms - could add another layer of depth - especially if mirrors could reflect these spaces.



A picture I took of my dad - I find the way our brains can recognize faces the human form with such little information fascinating + I want to explore how far we can reduce this information until the form is unrecognizable.

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