

WU GUANZHONG

吴冠中

Born 29-08-1919 and died 25-6-2010
 He was a contemporary Chinese painter recognized as a founder of modern Chinese paintings. Painted various aspects of China, including its architecture, animals, people and landscapes with an impressionist style from the early 1900's.

Impressionism - Art movement where the paintings are characterized with small, thin and visible brushstrokes, open composition, accurate depiction of light, ordinary subject of matter, inclusion of movement and unusual visual angles.

A city in watercolor and ink, more specifically Hong Kong. It can be seen that the painter used different colours to make the lights and also used them to define the buildings without using contour lines. The overlap of brushstrokes and colours shows how crowded the city is. The flat buildings give an unusual view of the town, perhaps because the painter used a rare angle for the painting. The grey sky can make an allusion to night but it can also be associated with pollution, which is mainly due to the fact that Hong Kong was controlled by the British in the 19th century and only then started to develop the industrial sector.

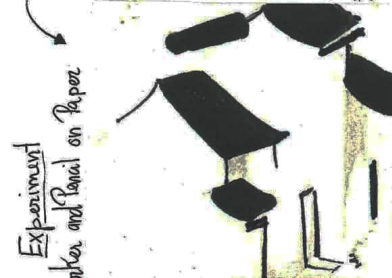


Experiment
 Marker on Paper



This is a painting from Jiangnan region, it is a scene from Wu Guanzhong's hometown and nearby regions, which are characterized by many rivers and bridges. In this painting it can be seen that the main focus of the piece is the river, which is surrounded by traditional buildings and people. The black roof and the white walls of the houses create a sense of balance in the entire painting.

The shadows in shades of grey made with, what seems, not dot of precision, made with a single brushstroke give an 'unrealistic' look to the piece. In general, this painting represents the daily life of the people from the village - a part of it. All the details in the piece made, in general, without particular care and defined lines, starting from the houses, to the people or even the boats with the exception of the bricks on the walls and the 'waves' on the river.



Experiment
 Marker and Pencil on Paper

Using a photo from back home that I took during the summer I experimented three different mediums on paper (pencil, pen and water color) in order to see what I was more comfortable working with and what would be more aesthetically pleasing. Even though all the sketches had an outline done with pencil, I feel like watercolor was the more successful because it allowed me to go towards the minimalist style that I like to do.

Pencil on Paper



Pen on Paper



Water color in Paper



SUNGA PARK



- Korean artist, graphic designer and freelance illustrator.
- Self-taught artist who enjoys the "unpredictable" nature of watercolors!
- to show natural aspects of the environment.

• Big part of her work is inspired by the architecture of the places she visits while traveling and that allowed her to develop her own style.

• Among her artwork can be seen pieces of Europe and India

• Almost all of her work consists in sketches from her trips and daily life: food, landscapes and people on the metro are few things that can be found.

"I always focus on showing my feelings through the common architectural features. When people look at an oriental painting their ideas can float along with the objects in the piece. I intend to attract the participation of viewers in this way. For me, art is completed by peoples' imagination or appreciation."



Paris

In this piece it can be seen a street of Paris, even though at the first sight and at the distance it seems like a blurry spot, as more attention is paid all the small details can be seen. Those details give a very clear view of the reality.

The colors used in this piece represent the blue of the night (in the buildings) and the yellow of the light adds to the impression of the night, giving at the same time a touch of warm, despite the background and most of the page being white.



Tom Gate, Oxford

This painting leads me to the idea that I have for my final piece since is a lot more blurry and with few details, even though the shape of the building remains the same, like a ghost.



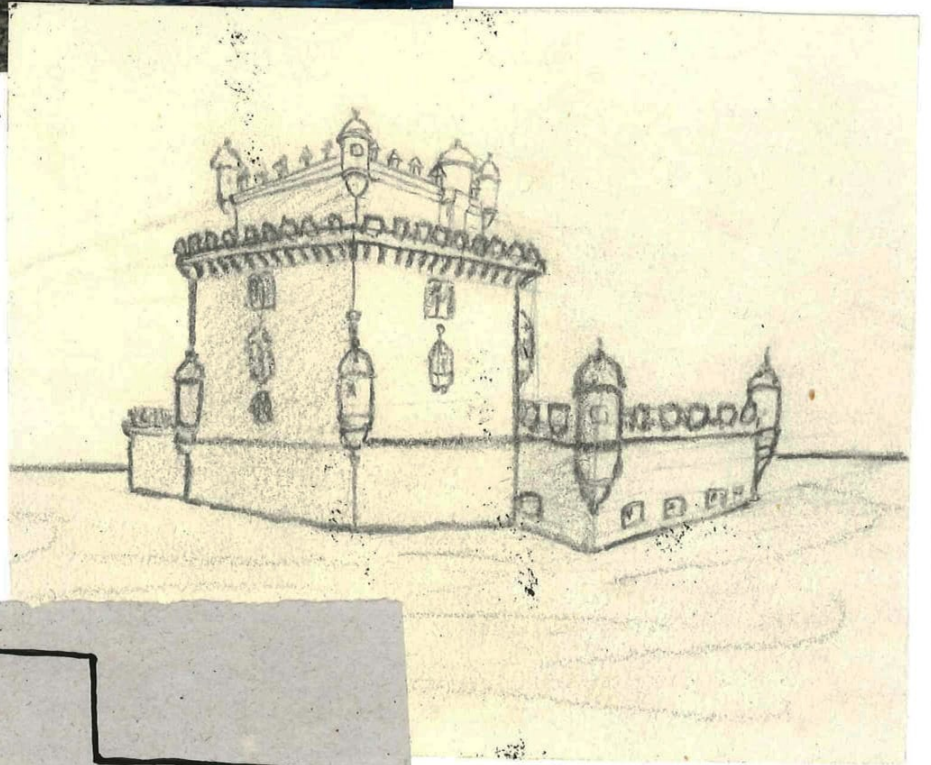
I choose this painting of her, even though I didn't find any information about it, because the details in this one are splendid. Although Sunga Park's style is a bit turn to comic or cartoon, like a not very accurate representation of reality with softer and less straight lines, it's impressive how she does all these detailed paintings.



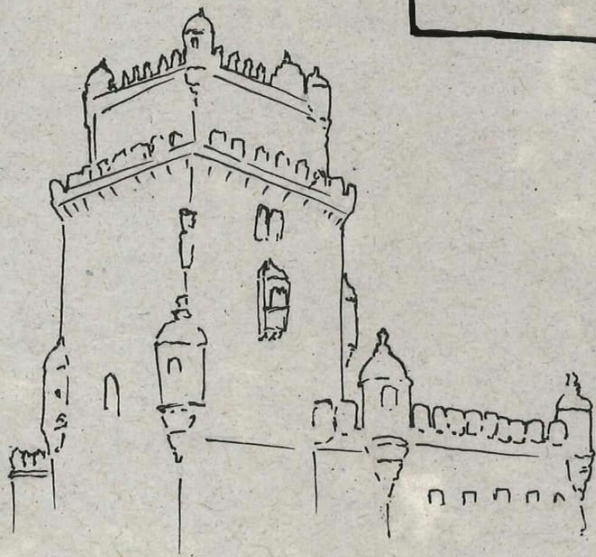
→ Torre de Belem
[Belem tower] is a fortified tower located in Lisbon, Portugal. It is a UNESCO World heritage site because of the role it played in the Portuguese maritime discoveries during the Age of Discoveries.
It was built in the 16th century and it is a prominent example of Portuguese Manueline style.

This was my first attempt of a perspective for the tower but it didn't go the way I wanted for two reasons:

- the horizon line and the vanish points were not in the right place (paper was too small)
- too many details.



→ That led to a contract of the building.

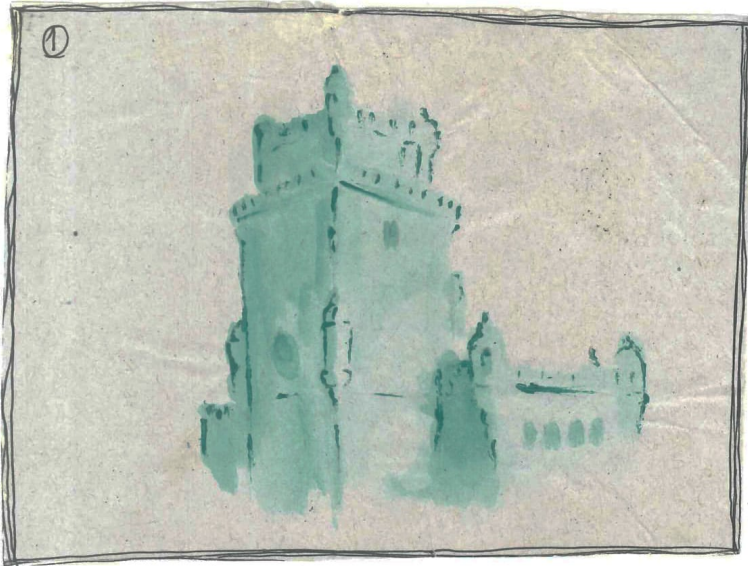


→ This was my second attempt of a perspective and this was a lot more successful than the previous one.

EXPERIMENTS

I did this experiments by order (1, 2, 3, 4) and as I was moving from one to the others I tried to make the contrast between the light and the shadow more pronounced.

At the same time I was trying to introduce and try different colours in order to understand what combinations would be the best to transmit my message.



Water - color on paper



Water - color on Paper

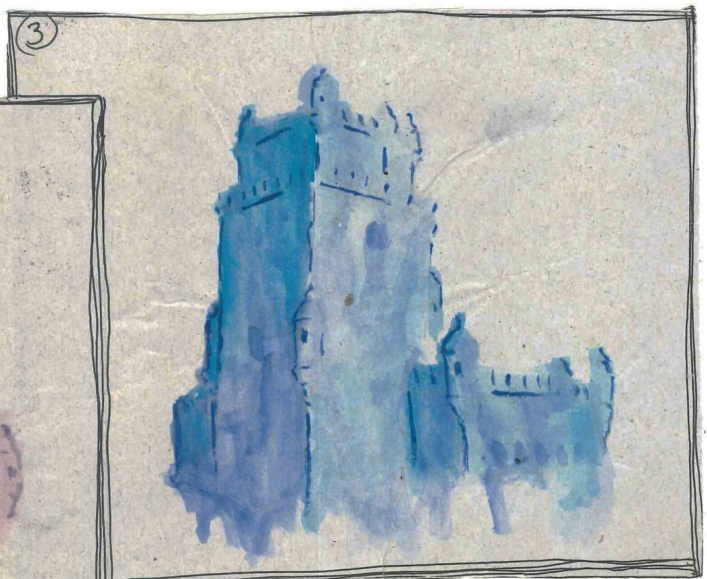
Another thing that I was trying to improve from experiment to experiment was the drops at the bottom of the drawings, in order to express that idea of a ghost building that I want to pass to the viewer. As it can be seen in the progression, the amount of water that I used in each drawing increased.

From an aesthetic point of view, I was trying to see how the small details would look like, how many and how thick they should be. I was also seeing the balance between the buildings and the empty space.

With these experiments I started adopting Sunge Park's style.

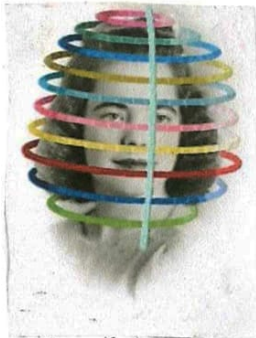


Water color on Paper



water color on Paper

WORKING WITH EMBROIDERY



Julie Cockburn

Their technique consists in modifying photographic portraits done by other artists using thread to express their own vision of the world.

Since always I've been exposed to a range of different mediums and recently I found three artists that have a very similar technique that inspired me. Those artists are: José Romussi, Maurizio Anzeri and Julie Cockburn.



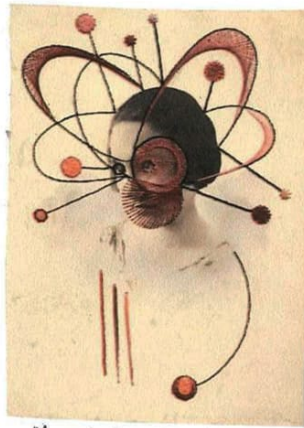
José Romussi

José Romussi was born in Chile, he grew up traveling with his mother who was a painter and a teacher. In 2010 he decided to be an artist. He once said: "My work is a constant search to be able to express and represent my ideas. I know there is more than what is tangible and visible and I do not think everything has been done. Therefore I am constantly exploring and discovering new techniques and materials. I want to give a new perspective to things that already exist and give a moment in time



José Romussi

to whatever has already been forgotten. I AM INTERESTED ON STITCHING THE PAST AND THE PRESENT: all surfaces are penetrable"



Maurizio Anzeri

He also said: "I intervene images by applying my own perception of beauty. Sometimes by giving them a new identity or a different aesthetic concept, it's a chance to give these images a new emotion (...), a new interpretation of beauty through embroidery."

M. Anzeri was born in Italy, in 1969. He studied graphic design and sculpture. Now he lives and works in London. He said: "I work with sewing and embroidery and drawing



Maurizio Anzeri

to explore the essence of signs in their physical manifestation. I take inspiration from my own personal experience and observations of how in other cultures, bodies themselves are treated as living graphic symbols. I then use sewing and embroidery in a further attempt to resignify, and make the space with a man-made sign a trace. The intimate human action of embroidery is a ritual of making and reshaping stories and history of these people. I am interested in the relationship between intimacy and the outer world."

J. Cockburn was born in the UK and studied sculpture. She learned photoshop in the 1990's. Julie says her digital skills occasionally outpace what she can do in real life. Her art work is an attempt of expressing what could not be expressed in the original photograph by adding an additional layer of content to it. She is trying to bring her work closer to the public by using vintage photos that could be the mothers or grandmothers for each piece, with that she wants to make the viewers comfortable with her work. Julie wants to take the viewers on a journey with her and make them ask themselves questions about the pieces, even if they don't understand it.



Maurizio Anzeri



Julie Cockburn



José Romussi

PROCESS



Julie Cockburn

Maurizio's process consists on him putting tracing paper over the photos and drawing on the face until it develops (image 1). When he begins to stitch he says "something else happens, drawing will never do what thread will"

For Julie, to begin each piece she looks junk shops and garage sales for old photos, often studio pictures from the middle of last century. She scans them and uses the computer to plan what she want's to do. (image 2). Then she transfers the digital sketches back to the original, and proceeds to cut or sew or drawing or painting. The results subverted the decorum of the tidy portraits and landscapes she favours, making something strange and beautiful.

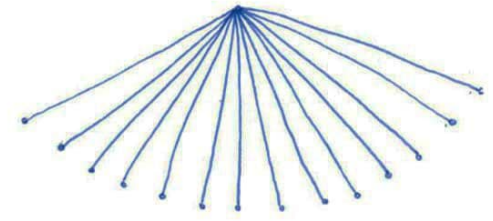


José Romussi

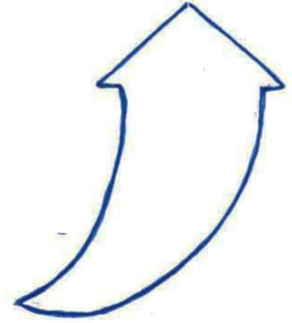


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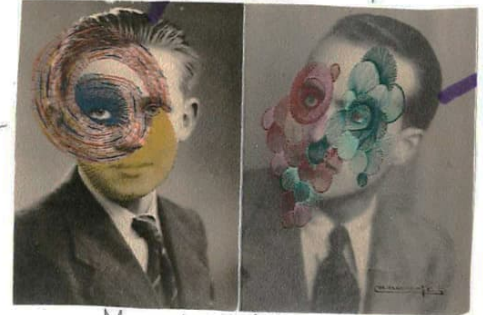
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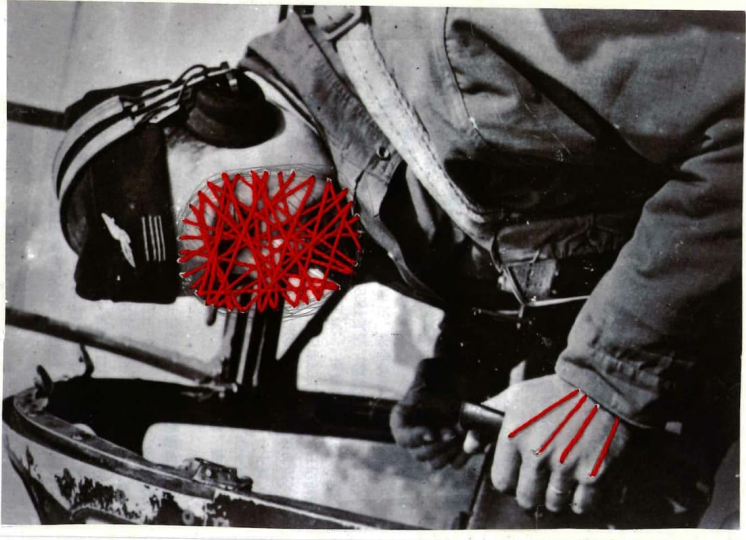
STAIN STITCH



RUNNING STITCH



Maurizio Anzeri



Thread in magazine picture - mixture of Joan Romms's and Mavis's style - chain stitches.

Working in such a small scale with different kinds of thread and an average size needle makes it difficult to do certain details, like for example the corners of the lines covering the woman's face. These experiments also made me realize how fragile paper can actually be and made me more careful with my art.



Thread in magazine picture - mixture between Julie Cook's and Joan Romms's style - running stitches.

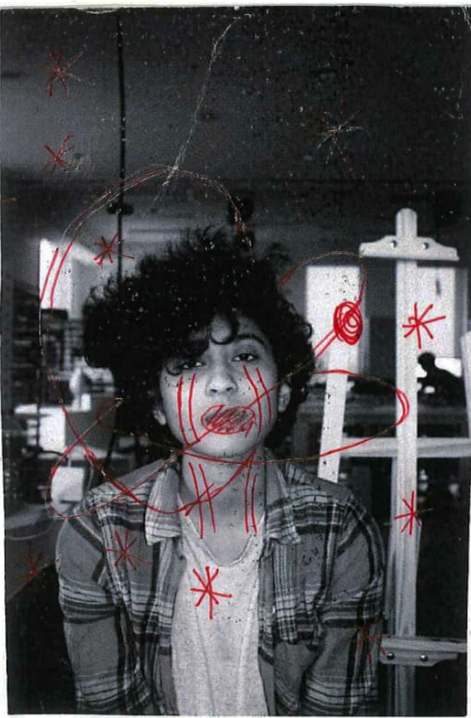


→ Thread in fabric (cotton and linen) to experiment different sewing techniques, all by hand and different kinds of thread.

For this first trial of sewing on paper, I wanted to keep things easy. I used as a base magazine images that I pasted on drawing paper in order to give thickness and make the paper stronger, therefore less fragile. 1 and 2 were done with running stitches and 3 and 4 with chain stitches. Running stitches were more successful than chain stitches but I think that the difference on the thickness of the thread between 2, 3 and 4 (being 2 the thinner and 3 the thicker) also played an important role.



MY PROCESS



Picture 1

For this project, instead of doing like the three artist that inspired me and use vintage photos, I took several photographs of my classmates, turned them into black and white and printed them in small scale, as it can be seen in picture 1. First I drew in all of them several patterns that I would like to embroider and then choose the ones that would fit my theme. Afterwards I used Photoshop to remove the background from the pictures (picture 2), printed them in A4 photographic paper and used the same method as Maurizio Anzeri: putting a sheet of tracing paper on top of the photograph and drawing the final pattern (picture 3).

I didn't want to have any pencil lines on my final work so, in order to do so I poked the photograph with the tracing paper on

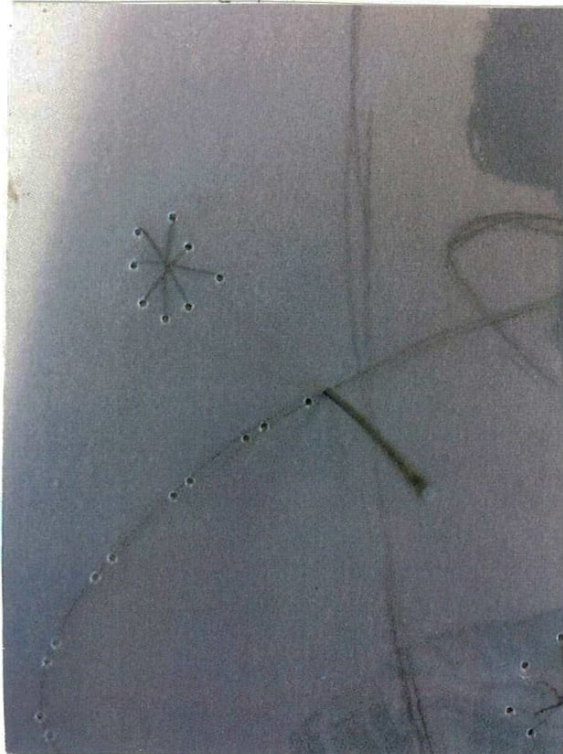
with a needle to leave the path that I would have to sew after.



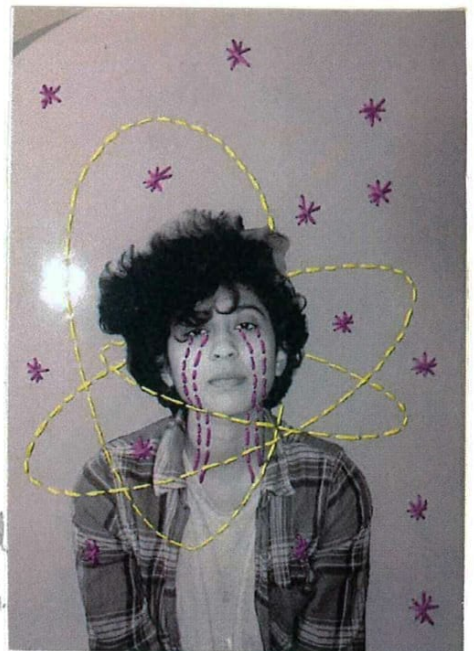
Picture 2

Picture 3 is a close up of that stage of my process where the needle and several holes can be seen on top of the lines.

The colors chosen for this project were yellow and purple (soft tones), opposite colors to each other on the circle of color. That was to give a contrast between the three distinctive elements that I embroidered on top of this photograph.



Picture 3





During the research for my TOK essay, I came across this artist Yayoi Kusama. Kusama is a Japanese artist that was diagnosed with depersonalization syndrome in her childhood. She lives in a mental hospital in Tokyo since 1977 and is known worldwide by the transformation she made in the world of psychedelic, repetition and especially patterns.

Every day she goes to her studio to work on her projects that are based in the repetition of patterns and says that if she stops creating she feels inevitable suicide thoughts and impulses.

Not only her artwork but also her

Yayoi Kusama

life consists in a combination of patterns that help her go through every day.

As it can be seen in her art, from the very early days,



Infinity Theory, Yayoi Kusama is a constant presence of dots.

In her most recent pieces, like "Infinity Theory" or "All Eternal Love I have for the Pumpkins", Kusama's color choice went towards very bright strong and vibrant primary colors (red on the 1st one and yellow on the 2nd), in contrast with white and

black. This, added to the fact that both these pieces are an entire room; takes the viewers to a completely different world, Yayoi Kusama's reality and universe. Looking at some of her 2D work, for example "Pumpkins", it can be seen that the background consists of two different patterns, the one above the pumpkins and the one below. Again, both the patterns have really



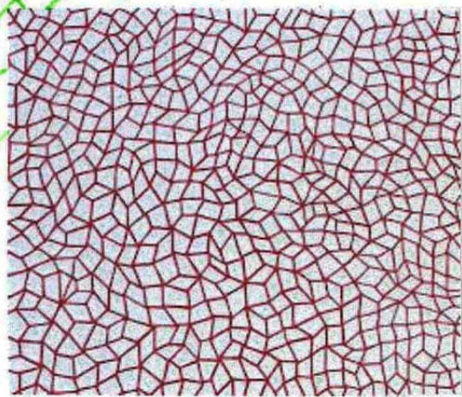
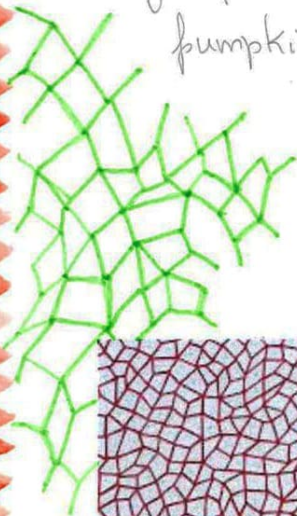
Pumpkins, Yayoi Kusama



All the Eternal Love I have for the Pumpkins, Yayoi Kusama

strong opposite colours - red and white above the pumpkins, black and dark green below them.

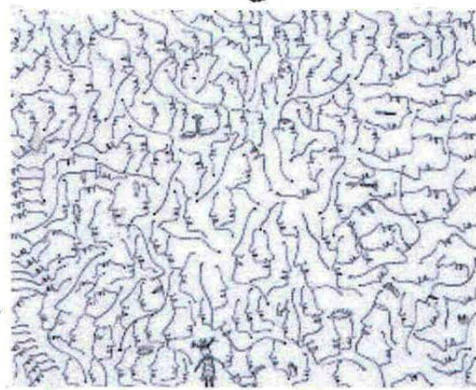
Even though the pattern below only consists of dots, with different but at the same time regular size and space between them - like the pattern on the pumpkins -



Snow, Yayoi Kusama

white background creating confusing geometric faces. If I look at this piece for a very long time it is almost like the shapes got together and create solids that come out of the piece.

"Lover's" is a piece where it can be found more repetition. It consists of several minimalistic representations of a human's face profile with the lips



Lover's, Yayoi Kusama

the pattern on the wall resembles another of her art pieces, "Snow".

"Snow" is a 2D representation of one of Kusama's infinity nets and consists of an intricate combination of straight red lines over a

confusing geometric faces.

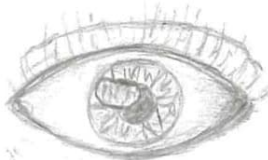
as only detail. Those faces are displaced in such an apparent random order that is almost like they create a pattern. Again, the contrast between the colours is a big influence to the effect of this piece - black against white.

The only part that can catch the viewers attention is a very small and basic drawing of what seems to be a small girl (by the clothes and the hair) on the left bottom part of the piece.

This girl might represent how Kusama feels in the world, where everyone is just surrounding her without any special or notable characteristics and she is just there, standing alone in the crowd.



Flowering New York, Yayoi Kusama



EYES in Kusama's work

Eyes are one of the most beautiful parts of the human body but at the same time they can be frightening and very powerful like they are in Kusama's work.

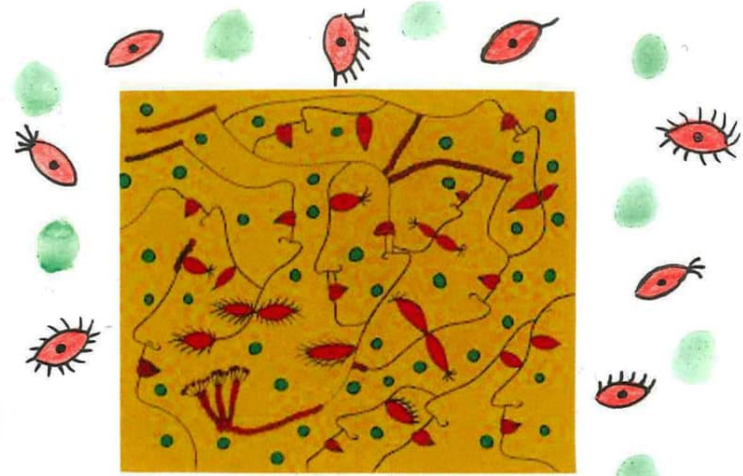
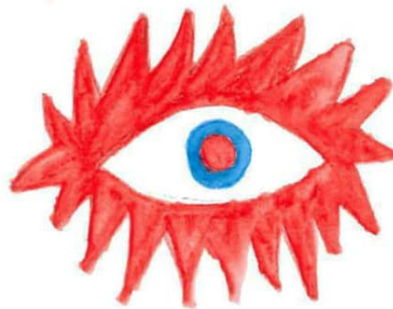
A lot of her art work has eyes as a central focus of the piece. This ones are just few examples. As it can be seen in



My heart, Yayoi Kusama



Close up to the small eyes



Seeking the beautiful Eyes

all this pieces there is a balance of content, either done by the color choices or the actual drawings. Once again the color contrast plays a major role on the meaning and purpose of the pieces.

Another example of it is Kusama's painting "Alice Adventures in Wonderland", where it is depicted a giant blue eye with red dots over a baby pink background surrounded by uncountable small blue eyes.

Most of her eyes resemble a flower where the eyelashes are the petals and the iris the center of the flower.

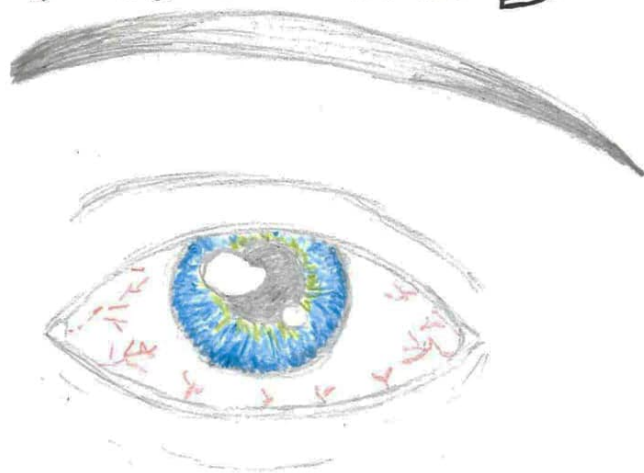


MY IDEA + PROCESS

I want to do a piece that represents PARANOIA. For that I'm using Kusama's work as inspiration and do a piece that is only constituted of EYES.

WHY??

Because when someone has this mental illness (like I do) is like everyone is watching them all the time. There are eyes everywhere, literally, everywhere. I also want to use contrasting and powerful colors like Kusama does.

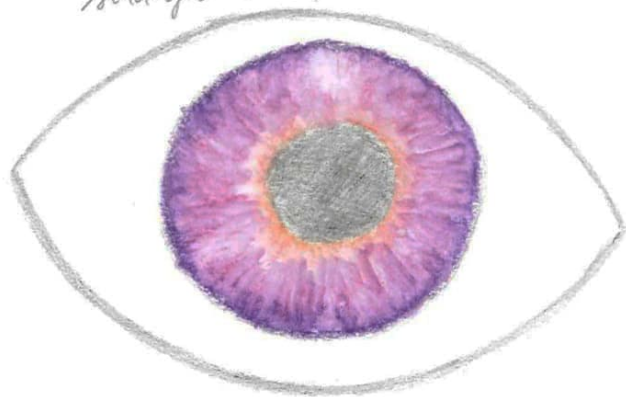


Pencil and color pencil on paper

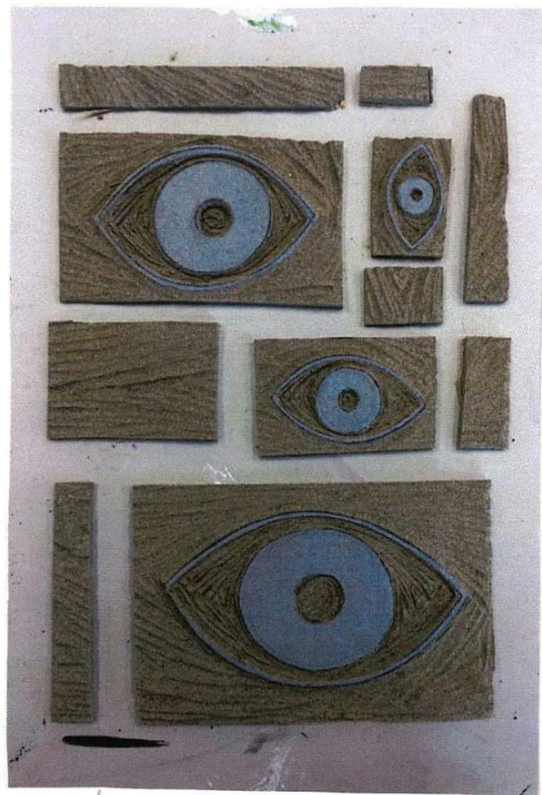
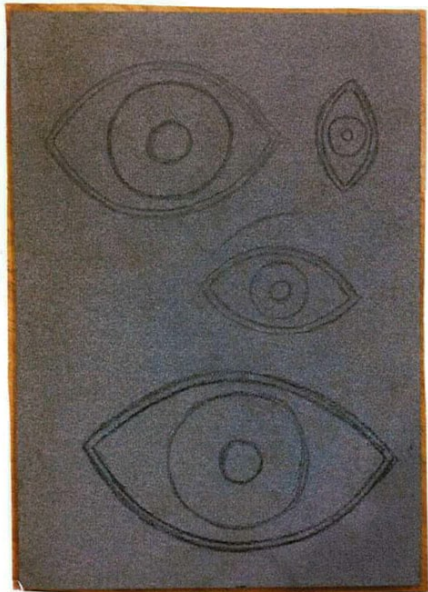
Normal realistic eyes are too complex for a piece that is based on repetition and it doesn't go with Kusama's style, so first I drew a simplified version of it (took the eyelashes off and reduced the number of details) but is still too complex.

My second attempt was much more successful. I basically took off all the details and just did a simple sketch of an eye.

I also increased the size of the iris in order to emphasize the idea that the eye is looking straight to the viewer.



Pencil and water color pencils on paper.



Since I want to do a repetition I decided to do printmaking because like that the eyes would be similar if not even identical to each other.

I drew 4 different sizes on a mold that I varnished and then cut into individual pieces in order to make stamps.

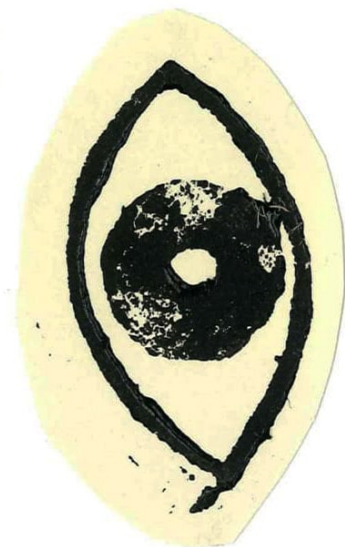
Afterwards I tried them on on paper and was satisfied with the result.



1st trial, way to less paint on the mold



Print making with acrylic on paper

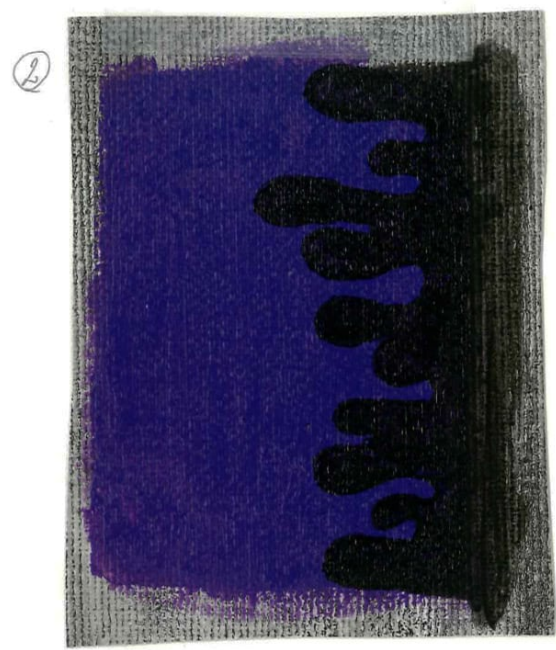


DECIDING THE MEDIUM

Experimentation on leftover pieces of canvas.



① Chinese ink and acrylic with matte layer on canvas



② Chinese ink and acrylic on canvas



③ Acrylic on Canvas.

I decided that I'm painting the background with a strong color and the easier way of doing so is to paint with acrylic in order to get a solid opaque background. After wards I experimented painting over the acrylic with other mediums to see how it looks like. Both ① and ② have about 8 layers of chinese ink and that color is not solid enough. There is also a contrast in ② between the matte black and the shiny purple. I also didn't like the complete matte one, ①. Therefore I experimented ③ and was satisfied with the result.



Scarlet



Crimson + Scarlet



Crimson

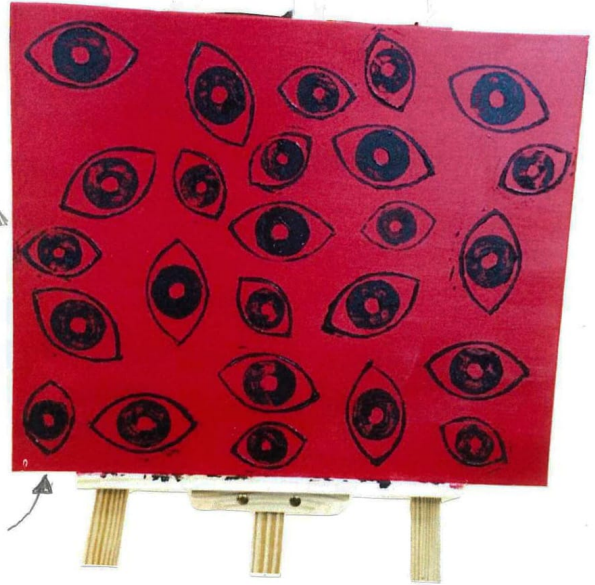
To choose the color for the background I sat for a long time and thought: "What color might have the biggest impact if I'm doing a piece about paranoia?"

The answer was pretty obvious - red! Red is a very powerful color that can either represent passion and anger, love or blood. It's the color of STOP signs and some emergency exits. It can also be associated with fear and danger and those are the emotions I want to transmit. Between these 3 shades of red I went for the Crimson.

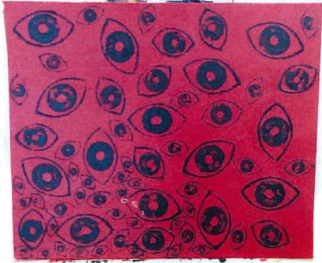


After painting the background with a solid crimson red I started printing black eyes with the biggest stamp randomly on the canvas. Even though it was random I tried to keep balance in the piece.

Secondly, I used the next stamp, one size smaller and started printing in between the bigger ones.



FINAL PIECE



Afterwards I went to the next stamp one size smaller and did the same thing again. My aim was to not overlap eyes and at the same time still fill up as much space on the canvas as possible.

Finally I got to the smaller stamp and started filling up the empty spaces until the piece was done. The image above shows how it looked like half way through this phase.



To me this piece looks like a very organized and balanced mess, like the one I have inside my head. I decided to call it Optic obsession. It's a repetition and creation of apparent patterns with different size eyes in an attempt of recreating the reality of people that suffer from Paranoia while using a simple and minimalist version of an iconing symbol associated with this illness on a daily basis.