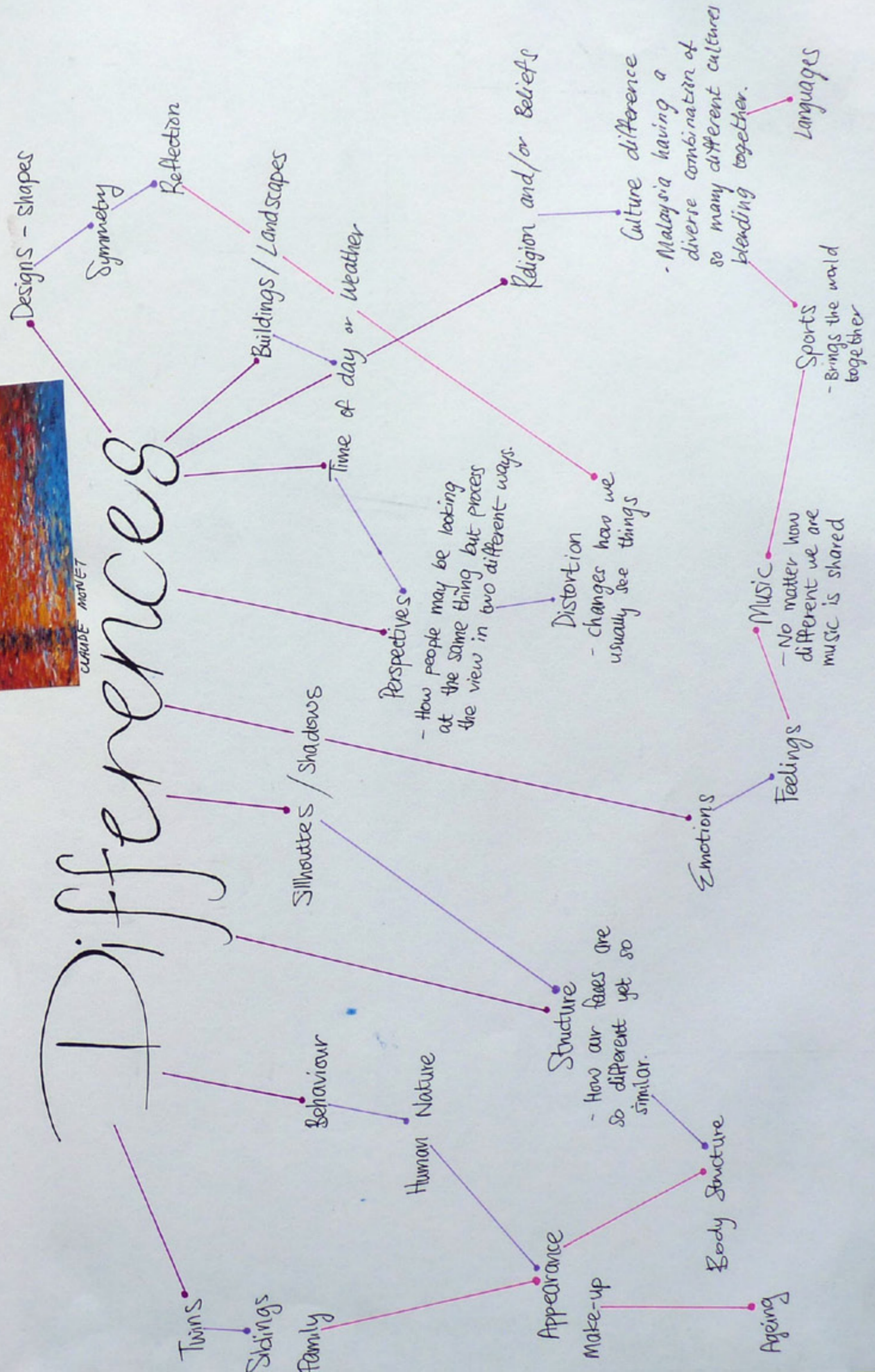


# SIMILARITIES



AND / OR

# Differences





# Eyes (response found after 'hands' response)



EYE PAINTING : SESSIL 2011

Much like hands (following page) eyes tend to deceive us when telling a lie or hiding something. They also reveal certain things such as affection and/or hatred by how we may gaze lovingly at someone. Once again there is the obvious link between the similarities between our two eyes but also the similarity between our eyes and someone else's eyes. However, what has always had me stuck in a daze, is whether or not what we see is the same as what someone else might see. What I mean is perception - how do I know that the blue blue that I see isn't actually a whole other colour through someone else's eyes? That very questions puts at how seriously unique and different we are from each other. Apart from that the physical appearance of our eyes are different - from the colour, shape, size and even how they are positioned on our faces has a great impact over how we look. Looking at the eye painting by Sessil is emphasising the blue hue that this eye holds. What I found intriguing is the reflection and light reflecting off the eye because it really shows how shiny our eyes are and reflective.

Much like Sessil's eye painting, I am amazed by the intensity of our eyes and how shiny and reflective they really are. What I further find intriguing is the skull found in the pupil of M.C. Escher's pencil drawing. I personally don't know the reason behind that but I have my own interpretations. Skulls often represent evil and death which shows that deep within us we can find the true evil within us and the true darkness we are capable of. It is said, that in Psychology, there is the true darkness in man's heart that suggest we are capable of the darkest acts right down to taking the life of another human. That darkness represents the devil within us therefore I am linking that belief that our true darkness within us is sometimes revealed in our eyes even when we don't notice.



EYE : M.C. ESCHER : 1946





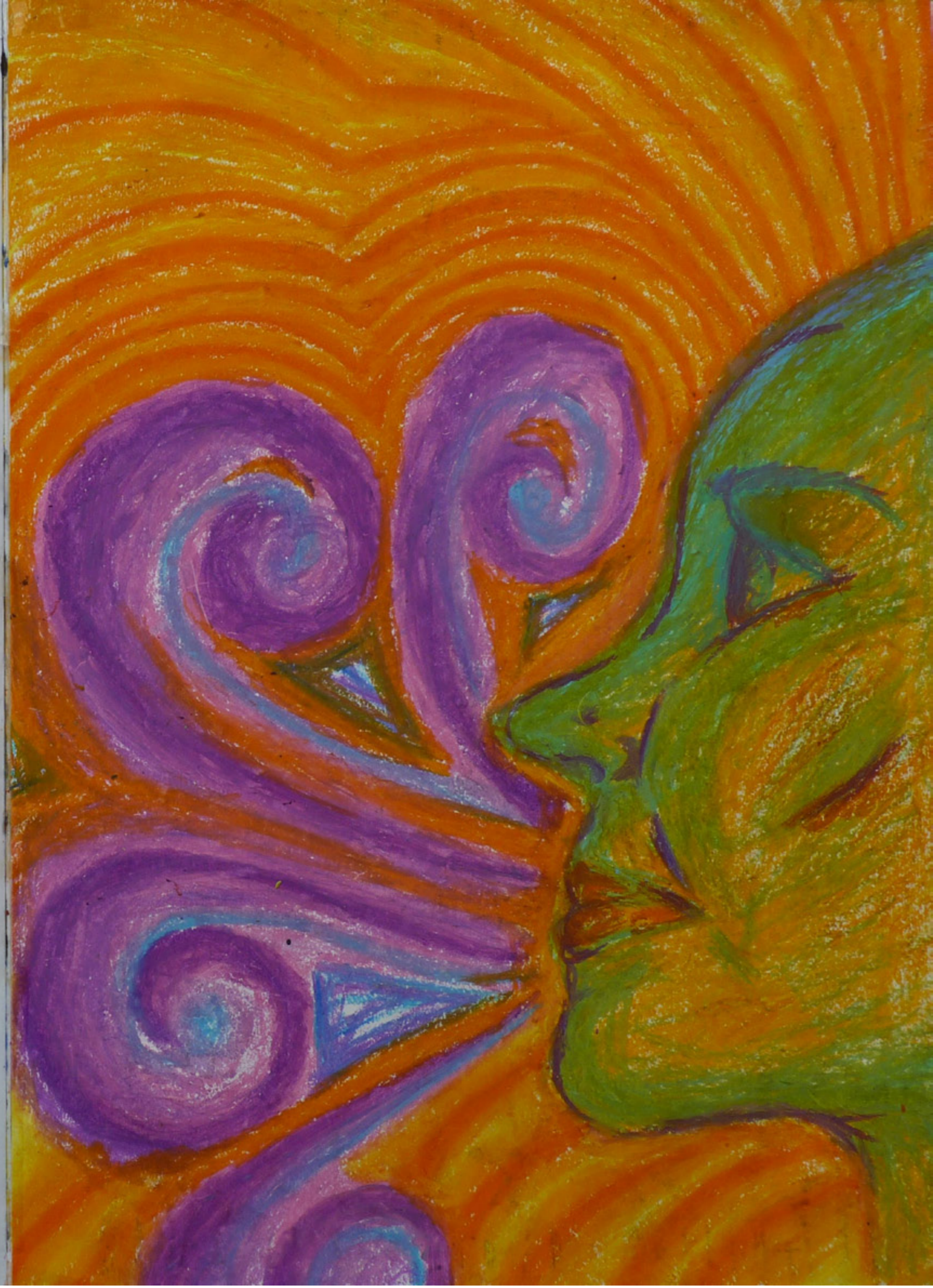
# Pastels



Similarities and differences is a wide topic that can branch out in many directions. One may be the medium you use rather than the importance of the subject (not saying that the subject is unimportant) pastels can be a very interesting medium as it allows the colours to blend and merge together smoothly and very differently from other mediums. I found this piece by Bowe captivating from the way the colours so strongly clash together yet creates a whole new image of a face - more specifically the image of a face of a red Indian. The difference in the colours, too, further emphasises the intriguing nature of the piece. I also like how the way the face is made is actually crosshatched in a zig-zag manner instead of filled in. It gives it a sense of individuality and an interesting twist on ordinary use of pastels.

This is my response to Bowe's interesting piece. I found it quite challenging to convert the darkness and light / shadows into different colours but eventually used his piece as a guideline to follow. I, too, drew the eyes closed as I was unsure of how to approach the eye. Overall I am pleased with the outcome as I gave my piece a different twist - instead of just crosshatching I also blended the colours together as well as outlined the darker areas with black to further make the facial features pop out.

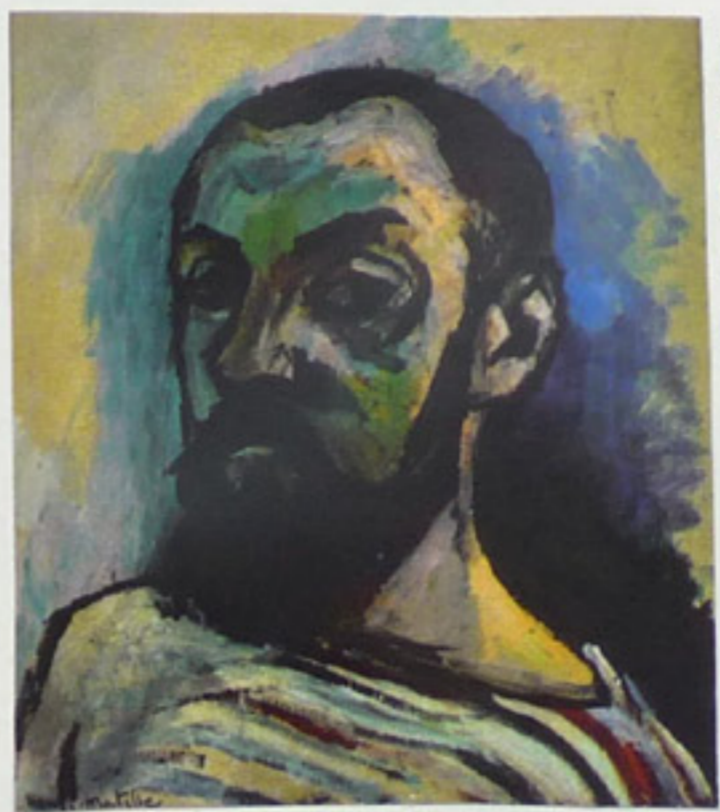
On the night was another response but in a totally different idea altogether. I still continued the idea ~~that~~ of using odd colours that are out of the ordinary for a face but using yellow, blue and purple but had a more pop-art approach. I also added a plethora of lines of bright colours coming from the mouth to signify the act of conversing.





# Portraits

KEVIN NGUYEN    HENRI MATISSE    PAUL GAUGUIN    HENRI MATISSE  
PAUL GAUGUIN    HENRI MATISSE



HENRI MATISSE SELF PORTRAIT: 1906

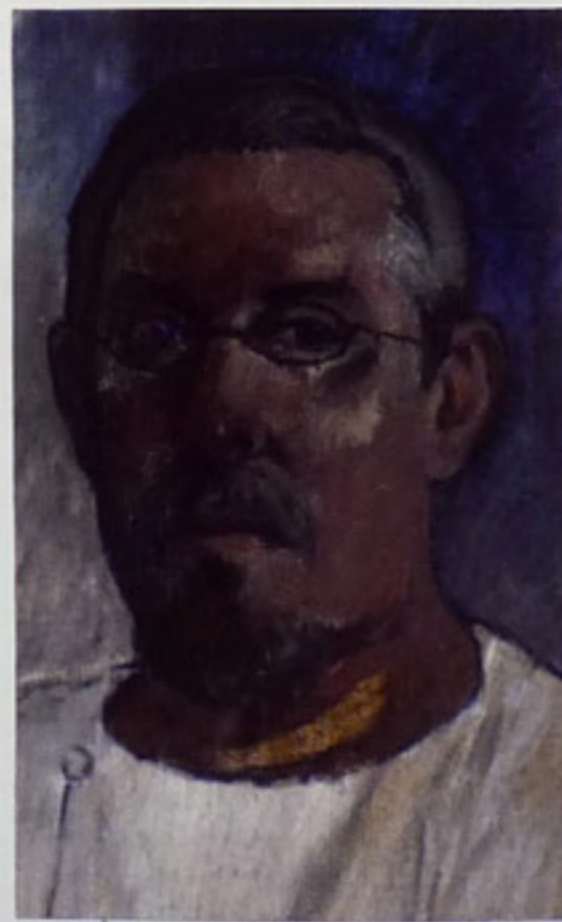
In this section I'm just observing faces and how truly similar we are with 2 eyes, one nose, one mouth. all in the same places yet we are so utterly different at the same time. We are defined by the colour of our skin, our eyes and hair which makes us who we are as an individual. I was influenced by some artists I found in the world such as Henri Matisse, Kelvin Nguyen and Paul Gauguin and their different interpretations and perspective on human faces. Like here, on the left, the self portrait of Matisse blends a range of colours such as blue, yellow and black to represent the light and darkness of our faces. What I find intriguing is the way brush strokes feel so spontaneous and messy yet neat and composed. It also has a pop-art edge to it but still

maintains its realism and true to life interpretation of a face.

Much like Matisse's portrait of himself there is an element of sophistication hinted in this portrait. However this portrait feels lighter and has a more pleasant mood compared to the other two pieces. What I also find intriguing between the 3 pieces is how much the colours used affect the mood it makes ~~the~~ us feel. The darker colours induce darker, more deep feelings whereas the lighter colours induce happier, more positive emotions. Another point I find highly intriguing is the / are the different interpretations and approaches each artist has towards their portrait.



KEVIN NGUYEN SAM: 2010

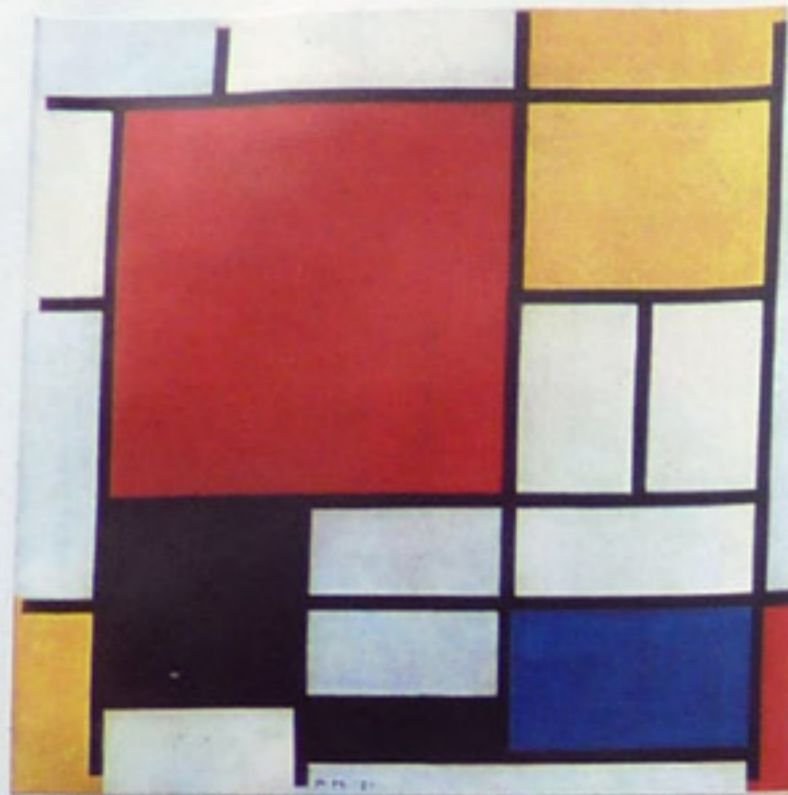


PAUL GAUGUIN LAST SELF PORTRAIT 1903

Similar to both artists mentioned above there is even less element of spontaneity but what I found appealing was the use of colours in this piece. As you can see it is fairly dark compared to the other pieces above which creates a sense of mystery and deeper, underlying emotions under the dark layer of colours.

My response on the left was a combined inspiration from the artists and their techniques on this page. Firstly I created a dark blue background with darker layers of blue over each other. Much like Matisse's piece, I felt very spontaneous and went straight for it without an initial sketch - only a face as a guide. I was really pleased with the outcome and the sketchy effect it has. It also feels energetic as I can feel the strokes that are splayed in all directions and how they move. Feels unexpected and completely random.

# Shapes



When studying shapes, I immediately found Mondrian who is a very influential artist that was famous and well known for his simple yet sophisticated artwork surrounding lines.

Shapes can differ from lines, to squares, to circles, triangles etc. but they are all made from the same thing - lines. But what makes them so different is the way the lines have been arranged to change its composition. Furthermore their size, colour, angles and such change how we perceive it and interpret.

When I look at Mondrian's piece, I honestly don't know how to feel about it which ultimately leads to me feeling confused and intrigued as to why he chose these primary colours, why those shapes and sizes. Similarly to Kandinsky's 'Several Circles' it makes me wonder what the artist was thinking when creating their masterpiece.

PIET MONDRIAN: COMPOSITION W/ BLACK, GREY, BLUE, YELLOW & RED : 1921



WASSILY KANDINSKY: SEVERAL CIRCLES: 1926

As I was searching through the WOFF, I was caught to this piece of artwork by Kandinsky. I found it highly fascinating from the way the light colours stick out beyond the black background almost in a glowing-fluorescent neon fashion. I also like the way the different colours overlay each other to create this plethora of colourful circles floating in a black pool. Similarly, I find myself confused with how to feel about this piece of artwork because, as simple as it looks, it has a deeper more complex emotion emanating and radiating off the piece. Most of the larger circles have a cool colour which gives the overall mood of the piece a cold and dark mood/ tone. In comparison to my response I decided to go for bold colours with a warmer feel.







# Culture



FREDERICK CHILDE HASSAM  
AVENUE IN THE RAIN 1917

A large scale difference between the entire world and the people in it is the culture and country in which we are born in. This therefore affects who we are and the kind of people we become. For example the culture and pride in African countries differ greatly to countries in Europe. Flags also symbolises pride, as mentioned above, for one's countries and the achievements of our country. However, it could be the total opposite of that by how someone could be embarrassed by one's culture and corruption of society and the government. But this is not the case for Hassam's painting as the American flag is presented and displayed for everyone to see. It is the most clear and bright object in the image to emphasise the pride of being American ~~(although Hassam was French)~~. The rain could symbolise the hardship that the United States had to face but still coming through stronger than ever. This painting is also a patriotic statement of how he feels towards the USA in terms and reference to war, soldiers and overall pride.

Apart from races and culture, countries have also strongly affected music and the evolution in music through the years. Jazz and Blues music was known for the soulful rhythm and heavy beats that had people tapping their feet and wiggling their fingers, and nodding their heads. It also undoubtedly created a culture of its own with the type of people it attracted and was surrounded by. Hurd obviously expressed how she felt about this music through the vibrant colours haphazardly dripping on the canvas. Both paintings express strong passion and emotion seen in the face of John Coltrane. The ~~trumpet~~ saxophone is also very symbolic of the jazz music played in the Jazz era which further elevates the 'jazz' mood that radiates off these paintings.



PORTAIT OF JOHN COLTRANE:  
PEPPA HURD

I personally feel highly influenced by jazz music and enjoy the jazzy-blues music. What I also find interesting is the way Hurd had decided to portray jazz music. It is normal to say that jazz music often was relaxing and mellow but Hurd expresses a different point of view that she has.



PORTAIT OF JOHN COLTRANE:  
PEPPA HURD

My response was highly influenced by Hassam's 'Avenue in the rain' as I tried to express how someone might feel about their country: for instance Malaysia. There may be a lot of global issues surrounding Malaysia which someone might feel surrounded or suffocated by as though they were being engulfed by these issues. I also tried to make it feel as though this person was trying to break through the confinements of culture and government corruption.





HOKUSAI : GREAT WAVE OFF KANAGAWA : 1873

Continuing on the topic of 'culture', this painting is an amazing example of how culture affects artwork and their outlook on certain things. I reckon, without any other knowledge on this painting, that just by looking at it, anyone would know that this painting is Japanese. This is because of the label Japan has created for itself which represents the difference between the different countries and cultures in this world.

Its appearance, on its own, has a very animated look with how each colour and shade is divided by blocks. And in reference to what had recently happened in Japan, this painting becomes much more significant in presenting the

danger Japan is always in. It is clear that if another artist from another country with a total opposite exposure to culture would paint a wave that would be recognisable to that culture and that culture only.

Going slightly off the top of 'culture' but was captivated by this photograph taken by Tom Ang last year. What really intrigued me was the way the dust captures the light which creates a ~~ray~~ glowing ray that is shining through the hole and casting a shadow through the hole. Another interesting point is the light and how it is the only source of luminance yet the underground rooms seems so warmly lit around the center.



KIVA DUST : TOM ANG : 2010

Linking (somewhat) to culture: Different countries would have different kinds of windows and obviously different structured homes.



UMBERTO BOCCIONI : DIVING OVER THE CITY : 1939

Going very far off the topic of 'culture', I came across this piece of artwork by Crati which I was immediately caught to. The way the building's perspectives come almost out of the page is so spectacular. It also makes me feel as if I was standing there in the cockpit falling straight down over the city. This piece is very cubistic and dynamic with how the whole piece, in itself, is this large 3Dimensional perspective of diving over a city in a plane.

I also particularly like the colours used in this piece because it has a very 'world war' feel from the way the plane looks to the sepia tone (makes it seem nostalgic) and the overall vibe I feel from this cubistic artwork.

The right is just a painting I put together that I felt could be included in my study of the theme 'Similarities & Differences'. I had mentioned a while back of the idea of faces and the similarity between each and every one of us, yet how different we are from the make up of our faces.



# Review

## Strengths

I found that my strengths are my portraits as a response to the artists. What I like about my portraits-response is the messy and slightly edgy look that they hold.

I would also like to explore Debra Hurd's artwork in relation to musical culture. And also have a chance to incorporate her background technique and influence my outcome

Therefore, I have concluded to continue with portraits but find different techniques on top of the one I had adapted from Matisse, Nguyen and such. I will also continue with the more dark and emotional facial expressions rather than a positive emotional outcome. For the background I will experiment further with Mondrian and/or Debra Hurd's enthusiastic backgrounds and techniques. As mentioned on the previous page, I could perhaps merge the two artists together to create a fusion of a completely new idea. And on top of that develop my portraits and react them together.

I also particularly like my response to Mondrian and Kandinsky and the different twist that I had put into it. It took away the element of how straight and restricted everything was in Mondrian's piece.

I am also highly influenced by Frederick Hassam's flag painting which resulted in my portrait flag response which I, personally, find intriguing because of the cultural background behind why I had painted it. My portrait paintings are also influenced by artists such as Kevin Nguyen and Debra Hurd.

## Ways Forward

What I would need to do:

- record more portraits (photographs painting etc.)
- find more artists that deal with portraits and emotions.
- Background development - look for more artists which include Hurd, Mondrian and Hassam.
- find other artists that may influence background development.

I definitely would like to continue on my path to portraits using acrylic paint. However I would like to try different effects on the background - because backgrounds are just as important as the subject (if not more). I am going for the more realistic approach on the face/subject with a slightly more abstract background.

I was thinking that I continue my influence from Mondrian and incorporate his style into my outcome

What I would need to do:

- also I would look at the different sizes and how that may affect the outcome of my piece.
- furthermore look at colour combinations and positions to change the mood and tone of my pieces.

Furthermore, perhaps a combination of Mondrian and Hurd?



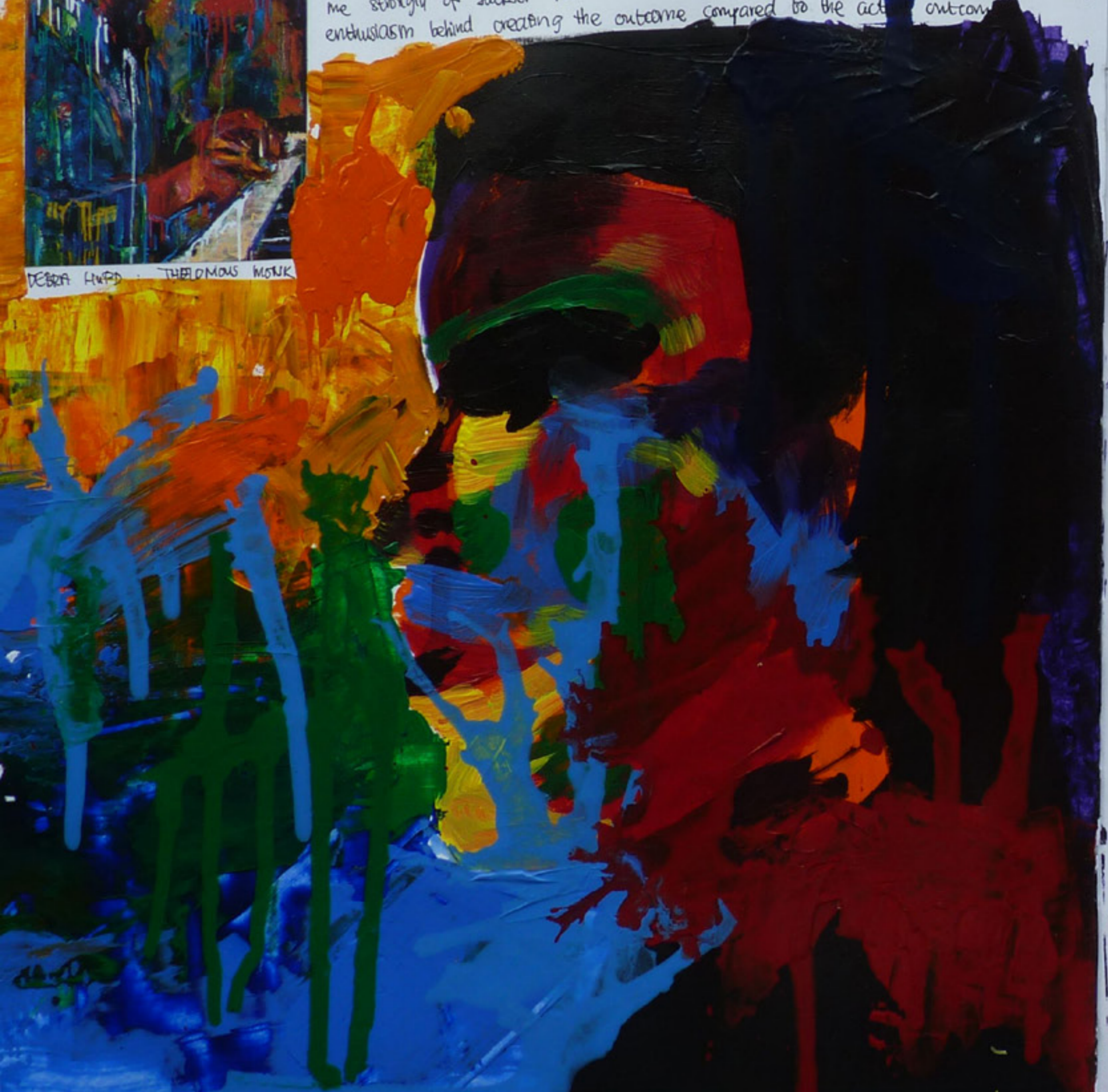
# Debra Hurd

One of my ideas of ways forward is to explore Debra Hurd's work and incorporate her interesting use of colours in the surrounding image into my face/portrait idea. Debra Hurd, too, paints portraits but in a more abstract manner whereas I am appealing to the more realistic side of the portrait. If I do indeed wish to continue my exploration on Hurd's technique I would have to develop and refine that idea thoroughly.



DEBRA HURD THE LONESOME MONK

What I am looking to incorporate into my outcome is the smashing background surrounding the lonesome monk but also how it engulfs him and dips onto his figure. It makes the piece come to life and really express the emotions and craziness that the artist may feel. It also has a very free-spirited feel from the way the drips are all haphazardly splayed throughout the painting. It reminds me strongly of Jackson Pollock's artwork from the way I can imagine the enthusiasm behind creating the outcome compared to the actual outcome.



OLD TRUMPET PLAYER: DEBRA HURD

As influenced as I feel by her artwork, I can't seem to approach the task of creating a portrait using unnatural colours with an open mind. I fear ruining the outcome but then that causes me to act careful and thus defeating the point of creating a spontaneous and crazy outcome. I do, however, still like the outrageous background I created surrounding the subject. I would have to develop the idea and add my own twist to it and apply other artists to it.

This other painting by Hurd is similar but looks at a different perspective and has a different approach to the technique of painting the figure. I believe it would be much more expressive if it was on a larger surface which allowed me to create larger strokes and splashes of colourful paint.

On the following page is my response ~~to~~ and my interpretation of what I took from this experience. What I did was painted a solemn portrait surrounded by bursts of colours to show the contrast and difference between the emotion on the face and the emotions created by the colours framing the face. I found that I had to apply the bright colours separately to allow the drips to layer each other instead of merging together to create one large drip of the colours mixed together.



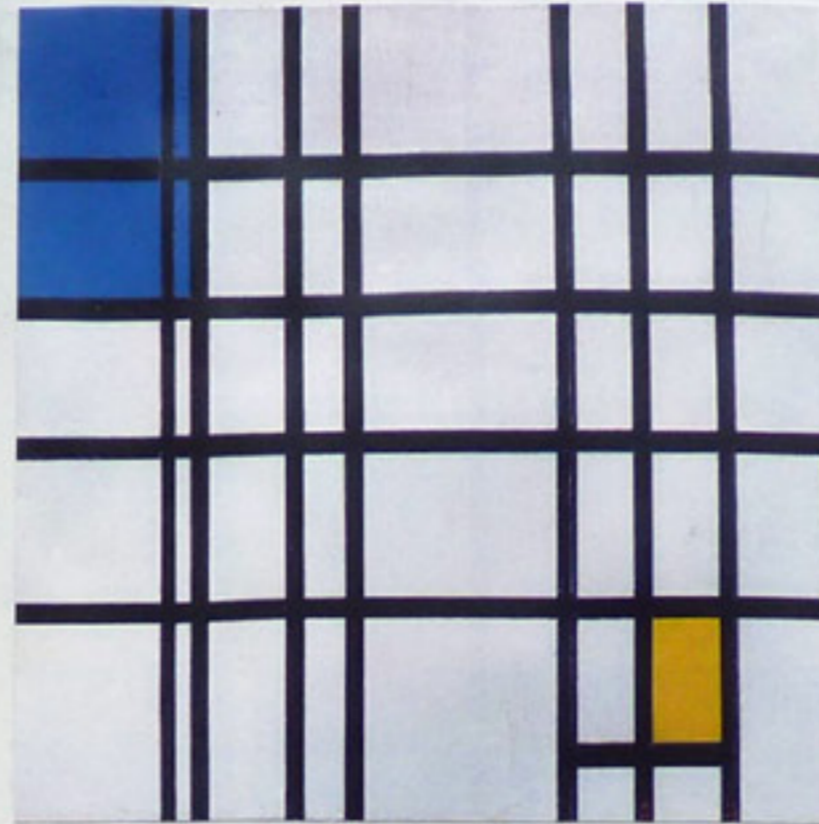
Here is a photograph of another piece I created in response to exploring the different techniques seen in Hurd's pieces. This piece is actually A2 sized just cropped to fit into my book.

This time, what I did was use dark colours so they were all dark and a lot more reflective of the overall mood and tone of the piece.

And also, the way the drips had been approached was different. In comparison to my other response, these drips were more watery and runny and therefore had a different outcome. I personally prefer this outcome because of how the paint doesn't drip but actually 'rains' down. This somehow makes it feel deeper and more depressing in addition to the dark colours.



# Piet Mondrian



PIET MONDRIAN: RHYTHM OF BLACK LINES: 1935

Mondrian was famous for his mysterious lines and squares but it was actually a form of art, just like abstract, cubism, futurism etc; it is called neo-plasticism. Neo-plasticism is the belief that art shouldn't be the recreation of real subjects, but the expression of the absolute of life. For artists, the only absolutes of life are vertical and horizontal lines and the primary colours. Therefore, artists such as Mondrian, only used planar elements and the colours red, yellow and blue. What I find slightly 'off' is the name of the artwork and how it actually looks like. The name of this piece is called 'Rhythm of black lines' 1, however, find it interesting because Mondrian expresses the lines (that are completely straight) to have said rhythm. To me this may be one of Mondrian's simplest pieces out of all his other compositional pieces expressing other straight lines. The only 2 primary colours used in this piece is yellow and blue. I wonder why? My interpretation, in regards to neo-plasticism, would be that there may be unevenness in the distribution of colours ∴ unevenness of the absolute of life.

This composition is one of Mondrian's earlier pieces when he first went into neo-plasticism and explored it. It is evident that he was still in the first stages of perfecting his compositions as they were not as smooth or hard-edged as his piece above. And for that reason, I kind of like it more than his other pieces because of how he uses one primary colour but created different shades of it. Therefore he explored one primary colour to create secondary colours. It somewhat reminds me of the human voice and our ability to take what Earth (and God if you may be religious) has provided us and manipulate it into something new - much like the quote 'when life gives you lemons, make lemonade'. That is my interpretation of this. It could simply had been that he ran out of blue and red paint but I am sure he had an influential story behind the outcome of this composition.

In comparison to his above composition, this piece looks like different sized squares put together in a puzzle formation whereas the piece above seems more like a pattern and creates similar four-sided shapes surrounding each other. What I intend on doing is to continue my use and exploration of portraiture/faces with a Mondrian neo-plasticism twist to the outcome.

On the two following pages are my further responses to Mondrian and so far I really am pleased with the outcomes that had been influenced by Mondrian. I like the way the face seems to emerge from behind the 'Mondrian-fluenced' design.

Furthermore, I tried and attempted to combine the 2 artists' ideas of neo-plasticism and Hurd's dripping and found that Mondrian's design strived on simplicity (as mentioned above) therefore have concluded not to combine the idea but simply choose which one I would like to continue developing for my final piece.

Note: I used colour pencils as a temporary substitute just to test the idea of combining techniques.



PIET MONDRIAN: COMPOSITION W/ GREY & LIGHT-BROWN







GABRIEL LIPPER: SELF PORTRAIT: 2009

I had actually already been influenced by Lipper's portrait but had yet to actually stick it in and annotate my journey. Therefore, all portraits painted since the review had already been influenced by different techniques and approaches by Mr. Gabriel Lipper. A technique that I had initially been intrigued by ~~the~~ was the tonal variations Lipper has in his portraits and also the vivid differences between the colours and tones. Yet they come together and blend smoothly to create the actual portrait. My lack of experience has created an inability where I cannot mix and match the colours with confidence therefore I settle for the more realistic approach of producing a face. What I add to my 'realistic' approach is strong, negative emotions to portray sadness and grief whereas Lipper focuses more on neutral emotions.

GABRIEL

LIPPER

Similarly to the above portrait, Lipper further uses unnatural colours to create a natural face. However this painting has more structure than the one above. It's evident from the way the eye is more detailed and the shadows are highlighted clearly to show the structure of the face.



GABRIEL LIPPER: SELF PORTRAIT: 2009

On the right is my successful attempt at replicating Lipper's colour technique and brush strokes. I am fairly pleased by the outcome. However, this took a very long time to create and understand which causes me to fear how well I could accomplish that on a larger scale.

\* An hour or so later \*

On the following page is my second successful attempt at reproducing Lipper's technique.

I somehow still prefer my original response on the right because of the slight detail lost in the smaller scale.

Update: I am continuing my portraits - work with a realistic approach. However this development has allowed me to understand depth and

→ structure on a different level. The different use of colours will now broaden my perspective when producing my portraits







# Frederick Childe Hassam



FREDERICK CHILDE HASSAM: ALLIES DAY: 1917

As I had mentioned many pages back I love pride in one's country and Hassam is an artist who was proud for his country and its accomplishment in the world war. These two paintings are only a few of his 'flag series' of 30 other paintings. His pride is evident from the way the American flag is proudly displayed amongst the other flags. Furthermore it is the most prominent flag between all the other flags. It is also the highest flag compared to all the other flags which suggests that, to Hassam, the United States is of a higher status and is somewhat better than all the other countries.

On the right is another painting found in the 'flag series' and once again proudly displays the American flag as the main subject. However this time Hassam is truly emphasizing his pride as seen by the cluster of U.S.A.

seen by the cluster of U.S.A. flags only. To be honest, the only thing that my eyes see in any of his 'flag series' paintings are the flags themselves. Everything else surrounding the flags all become one great blur - making the flags stand out even more. I am half Malaysian and half Irish which makes me a proud 'owner' of two, very strong and opposing culture. Hassam is influencing me to embrace those two cultures and express it into my final piece. What I am thinking about attempting is to combine the Malaysian flag and the Irish flag and somewhat recreate my response to Hassam found many pages back.



FLAGS ON THE WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL: 1916



# Kris Knight



WHITE PEAKS: 2008

Kris Knight is a Canadian painter whose work examines performances in relation to the construction, portrayal and boundaries of sexual and areal identities. The focus of his work attempt to find a balance between the dichotomies of pretty and menace, myth and reality, sanctuary and susceptibility. Historical references of alchemy, mysticism and the macabre influence his work. Contemporary notions of androgyny, fashion, grunge, zombies, psychoactive drugs and small town Canadiana have also been depicted within various series. His work is often threaded with the unifying theme of defense and vulnerability, whether it was depicted by his character's ~~swater~~ dress (hoodies, trapper parkas, Nordic sweaters, blankets, furs, powdered cake makeup) or seasonal settings (foreboding forests for secretive queer rural teen love, or fields of scarecrow-like characters portraying small town migration at harvest) and bound by his own personal stories.

When I first saw this piece I immediately assumed it was a female from the soft features of her face such as the delicate curve of her jaw, arch of her eye brows and full lips. I then noticed the light mustache on her upper lip and I was immediately astounded and intrigued by his work. As mentioned above, Knight is influenced by the notion of androgyny which could

be found throughout his work. Similarly on the right, there is an uncharacter softness in the face and structure of this male's face. In this series, compared to the series found above, there was an eerie chill found in the collection by the icy blue used to paint the faces and the contrasting colour of the furs and his lips creates this sense of death - as it looks like all the blood had been sucked out of him. This piece also links to his theme of vulnerability found in the foreboding forest - seen by the bare trees stripped of its leaves. The blue theme also creates a feeling of loneliness and isolation.

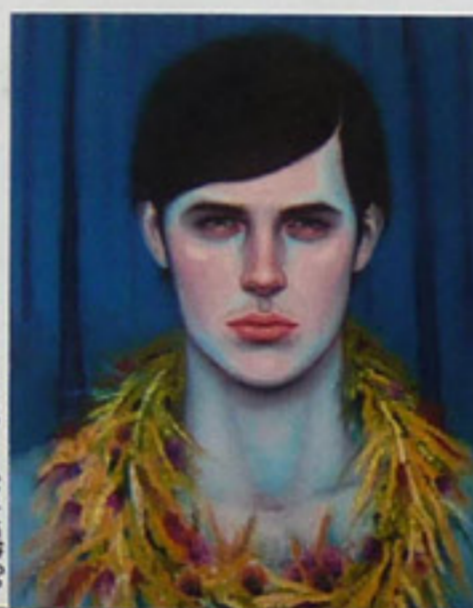


BLOOD FLOWERS: 2010

There is a certain intensity in the eyes of each portrait. How they look directly at you with a piercing emotion. It almost makes you feel as if you are being frowned upon with their judgmental eyes such as the painting 'spook' or 'solidato'.

Each painting has a different eye glow and each one has a hint of teary-eyed gleam of, somewhat, a plea of understanding thus further linking to the idea of vulnerability.

On the following page is my response to Kris Knight's artwork and ideas. By using the ~~too~~ blue hue through his artwork, it gave me a greater understanding of depth in the face and ~~is~~ also greater understanding towards the impact the eye contact + intensity may have on an individual.



SPOOK: 2008



SOLIDATO: 2008



WINTER GHOST: 2008



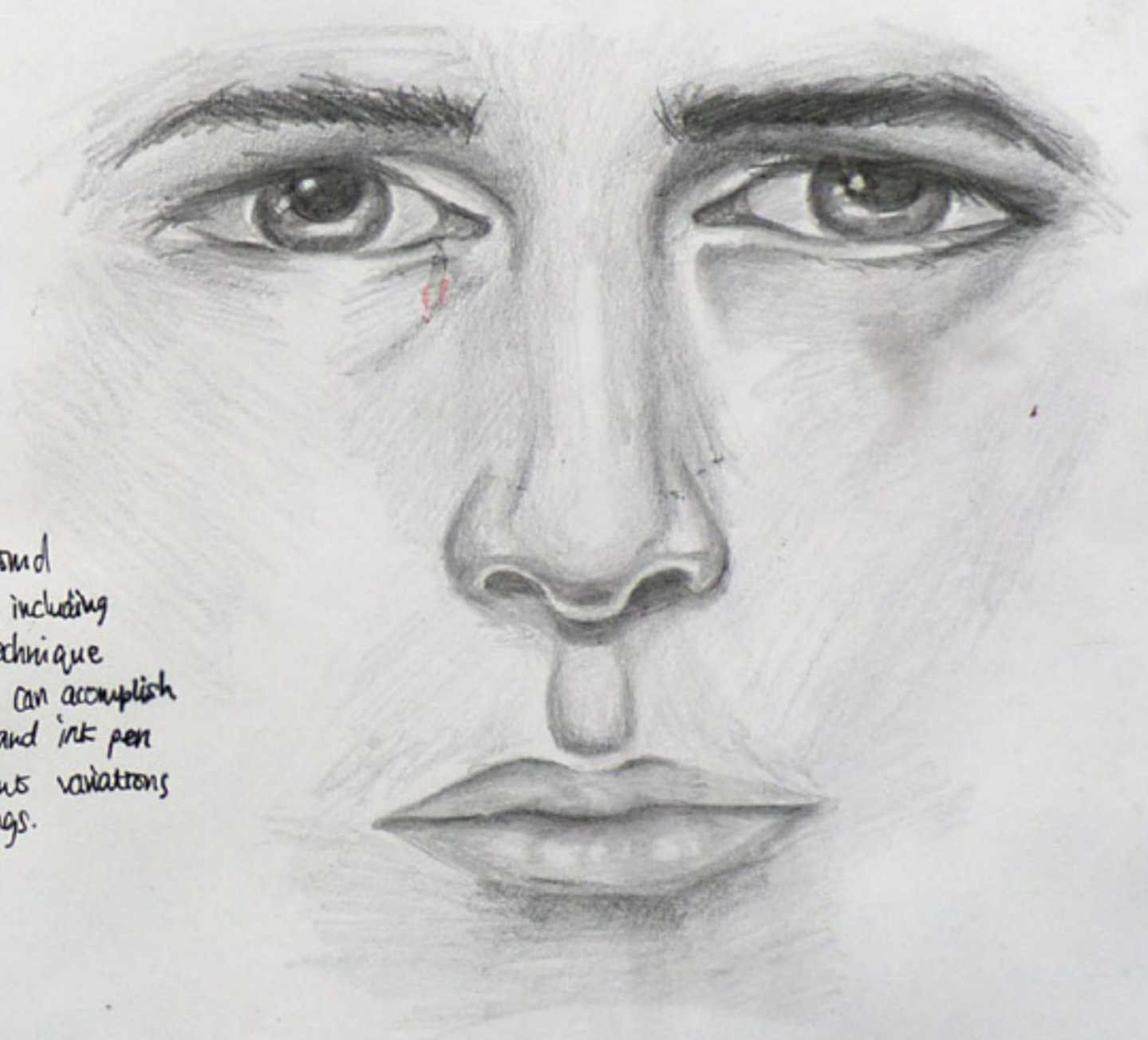
APOROUS VERANOUS: 2010



# eye development : increasing intensity

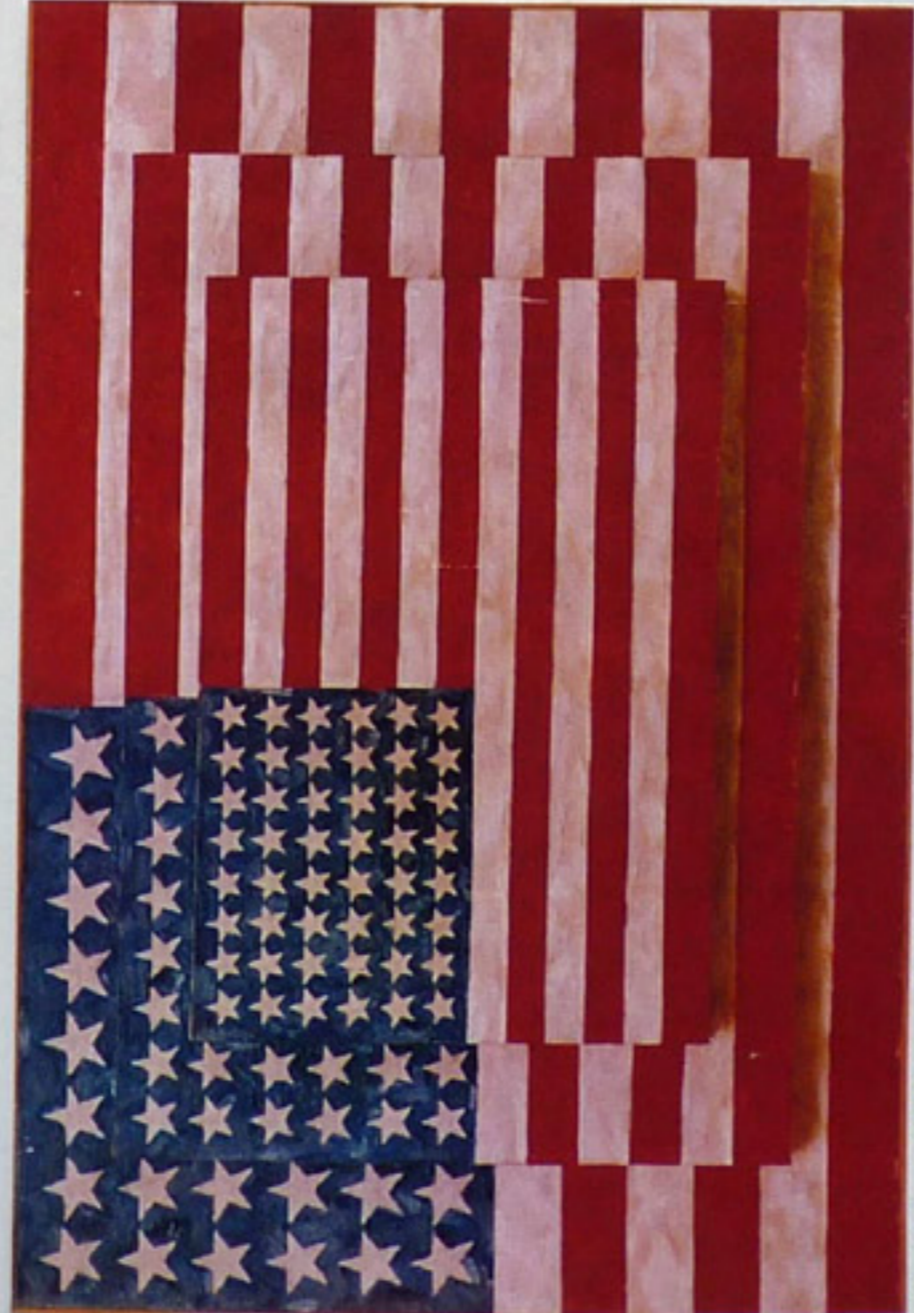


Here, I am just looking at intensifying the emotions that shine through the eyes. ~~The~~ thought was brought up by my research on kids knight and how each and every one of his portraits shows such strong emotions.



I decided to play around with different mediums, including acrylic (to develop my technique and identify whether I can accomplish what I expect) pencil and ink pen just to see the different variations I get using different things.





JASPER JOHNS: THREE FLAGS: 1958

almost like an abstract piece of artwork - open to interpretation - yet it is not because it is so obviously a flag. Or is it?

What I wish to take from this is a new found understanding for flags and culture and how, we as individuals, see and process everything differently Godfrey's description as he paints 'flag':

As I paint, I am considering land and water masses, civilizations' impact upon the terrain, communication channels and the vertiges of shifting powers."

As I look at it, it reminds me of maplem and corruption but to someone else it may have the most opposite thought. It is undeniable that racial / political / national flags are highly thought provoking.

... which brings me to my small response on the previous page. Upon first glancing at it, it may seem like a Malaysian flag but also has the flag of Ireland. I attempted at fusing the two flags together but found that it was quite hard to combine the two. Therefore if I was to use a flag as the background, I would use the Malaysian flag seeing as it is more dynamic.

# Flags and Mem-branes

Unfortunately my other artist I tried to find that painted flags were all flags of the United States. I don't have an issue with that but I just wanted to see if there is any difference between different artists of different countries and races Jasper Johns is famous for his paintings of numbers and other interesting collages. One of his most famous paintings is the 'three flags' painting which raised many brows as to whether it is considered 'art' or just another flag. It was also questioned whether it was provocative or respectful. This painting was painted in 1958, which explains why the 'star spangled banner' only has 48 stars - Alaska and Hawaii weren't yet states. The painting in itself isn't a painting but more of a sculpture resulted by the way he used encaustic which makes each flag at least 5 inches thick.

What I find intriguing is the meaning behind this blasphemous/prud painting which is that everyone will find their own meaning ~~the~~ in it - depending on your race, age, political views and the time in which you live in. It is



BRENT GOFFEY: FLAG: 2008

# Michael Babyak

I have always been highly influenced by Babyak's work since my first book themed 'Surfaces'. I absolutely love his work with a passion because of the strong emotions that radiate off of his paintings. I recently noticed that in every piece there was/is a stencil of the sentence 'MADE IN USA' to express his country of origin and also it may be the place at which the guitar was made. I also like the way the backgrounds are so diverse and layered against each other never fails to intrigue me.



MICHAEL BABYAK: GICLEE: 2008

The stencil of 'MADE IN KL' - KL stands for Kuala Lumpur which is the capital city of Malaysia - signifies where I was born and how I may share this similar location of birth with millions of people. I somehow feel connected to another person because of it.

The flag in the background, which creates the effect of me submerging against it, could mean anything to anyone but to me it symbolises pride and how I am different to everyone else yet share



MICHAEL BABYAK: PRINT 61 • 2010

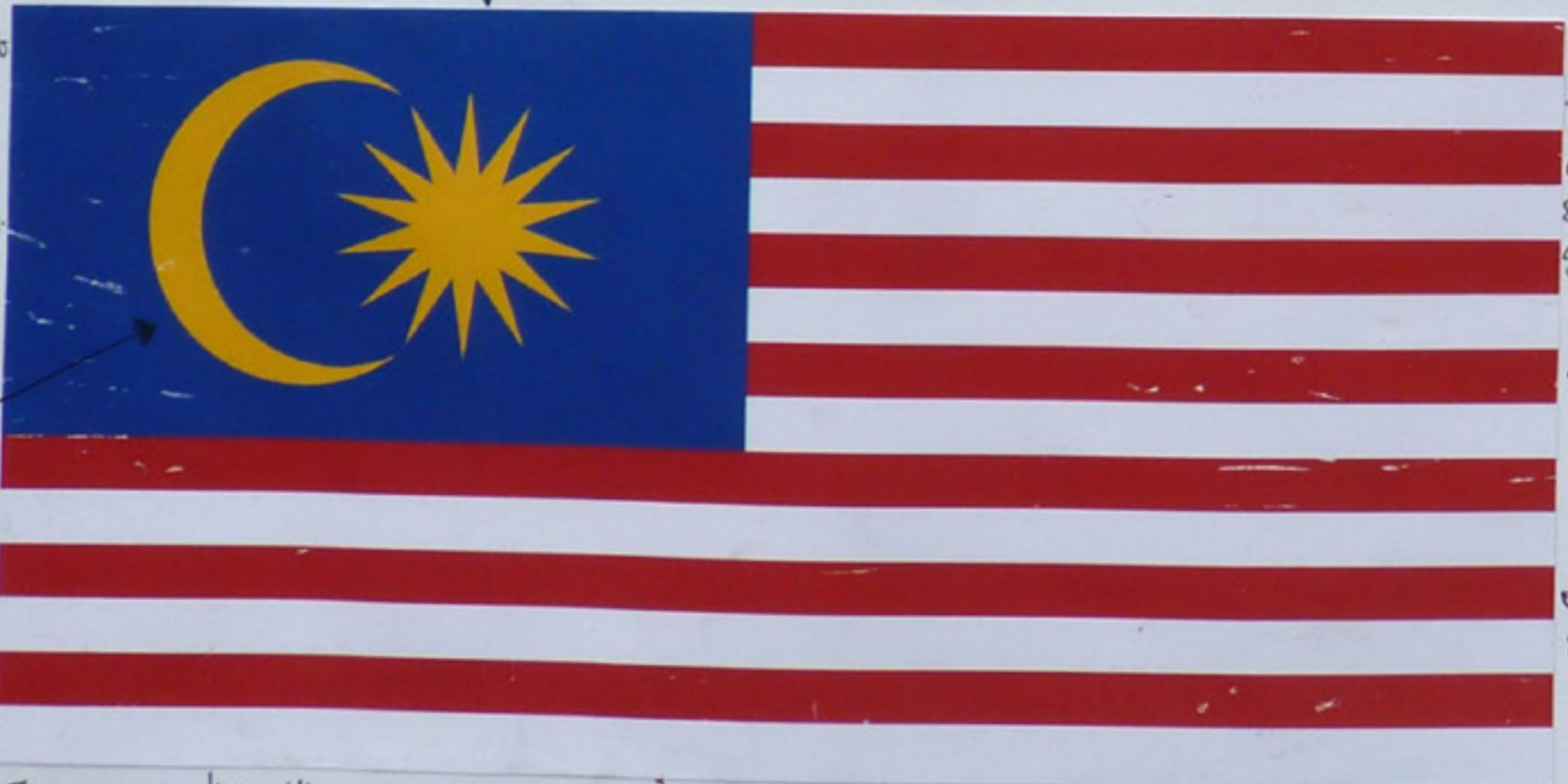
Such a similar face as myself - bang a mixed race person.

I figured that if I was to continue my development with the Malaysian flag that I found some historical background information on the Malaysian flag and what the designs and colours symbolise.

Called the 'Jalur Gemilang' (Malay for 'stripes of Excellence').

The star is the symbol of the Federal star.

The crescent represents Islam, the country's official religion. The yellow of the star and crescent is the royal colour of the Malay rulers.



The 14 stripes represent the equal status of the 13 member states and federal government.

Red represents steely will.

The crescent has 14 points which symbolises the unity between the states and Federal government.

The crescent represents unity and kind character.

Note: On the right (my response) I used a photograph as a test instead of painting an entire portrait.



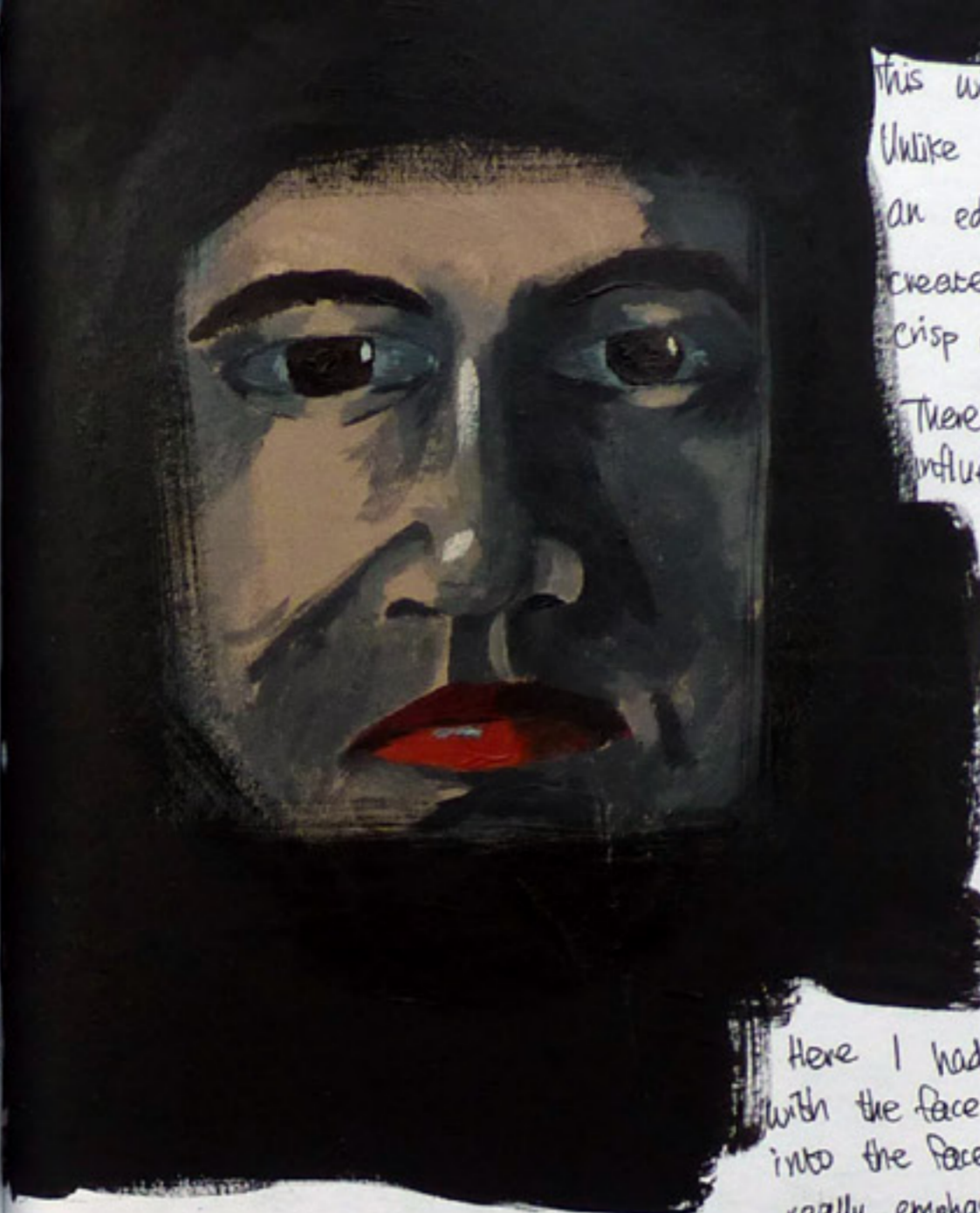
# Portrait Studies

Here I'm just looking at shadows that are cast on faces and the different angles the faces' shadow create. It will give me (Hopefully!) a greater understanding on shadows and light when painting my portraits.

What I recently discovered was that I don't know how to reproduce something I see therefore I often draw/paint a random face but use the one that I see as a guide to know where the shadows lie and the light takes over.

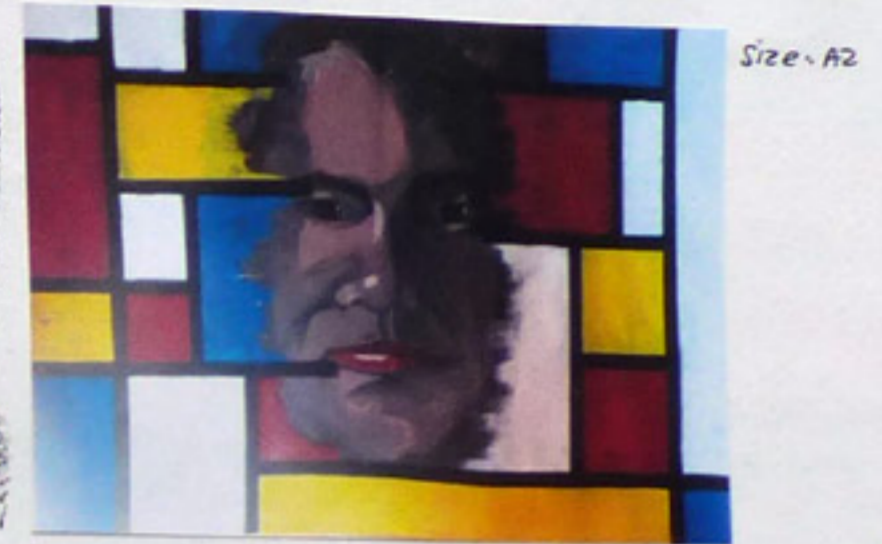


I took quite a few pictures that had a significant amount of light on one side of my face to create obvious shadows on the opposite side of my face. I look at my face as a guide to roughly estimate the proportions and the variation of skin tone.



This will be how my portrait will most likely turn out. Unlike a pencil drawing, I like that the acrylic creates an edgy effect which makes it look a little rough to create a contrast between the face/portrait and the crisp and precise 'background'.

There is a flag on the previous page which had been influenced by Mondrian and various other artists.



Size: A2

Here I had tried to incorporate the completely Mondrian influence with the face. I found that I didn't like the way the acrylic blended into the face. I also wished that I had created a smaller face to really emphasize the strict lines and colours (which, unfortunately, was accomplished very badly due to a mistake in medium choice).

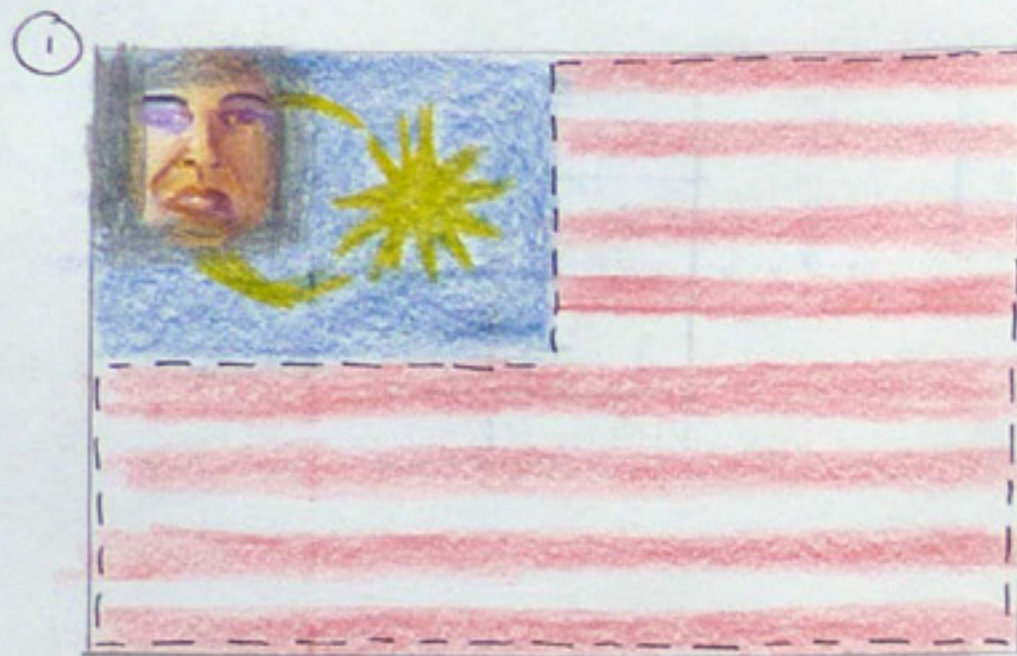


However, after creating the flag with Mondrian influenced lines, I produced this A2 piece of both ideas combined together. I also looked at what I did wrong in the piece above and fixed it to improve my outcome. I painted a smaller face to really show off the flag. I also blocked off the face as part of the squares, instead of trying to merge them together. I was also very careful with masking my lines to ensure maximum accuracy. And also, after looking at Rabyat's work I added my 'MADE IN KL' as a symbol of where I was born.

What I recently noticed was that, much like neo-plasticism, the Malaysian flag consists of the 3 primary colours with white therefore it is just a more structured influence of Piet Mondrian and the <sup>part of</sup> neo-plasticism. In my compositional ideas, I will be looking at the different locations of the face, the positionings of the black lines (and what they mean to me) and also the position of the 'MADE IN KL' stencil. I will also be looking at what size I am to create my final outcome and on what material i.e. paper, canvas, wood etc.

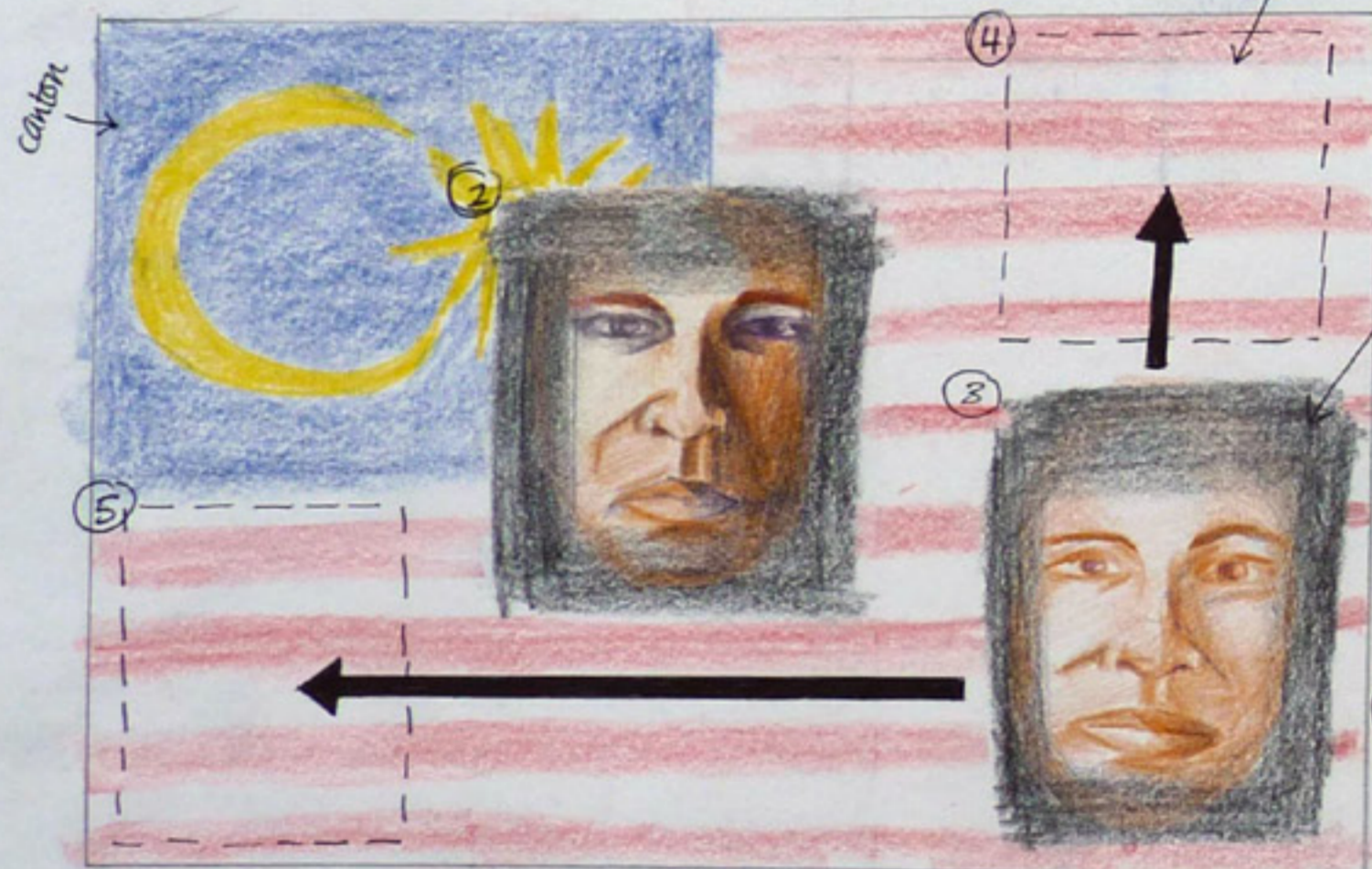
# Compositional Ideas

Face: (These sketches do not include the black lines that will be addressed in the second section)



1 Now I'm just looking at different positions the face could be in. Please note that I drew the face too small and is not the same proportion as it should therefore it needs to be a little bigger. I don't like the position of the face there as it is concealing the crescent and I would like the ~~face~~ <sup>canton</sup> to be mostly untouched by anything other than the black divisions.

I would prefer if the face was somewhere within the dotted lines however I wouldn't mind if it went slightly over the line.

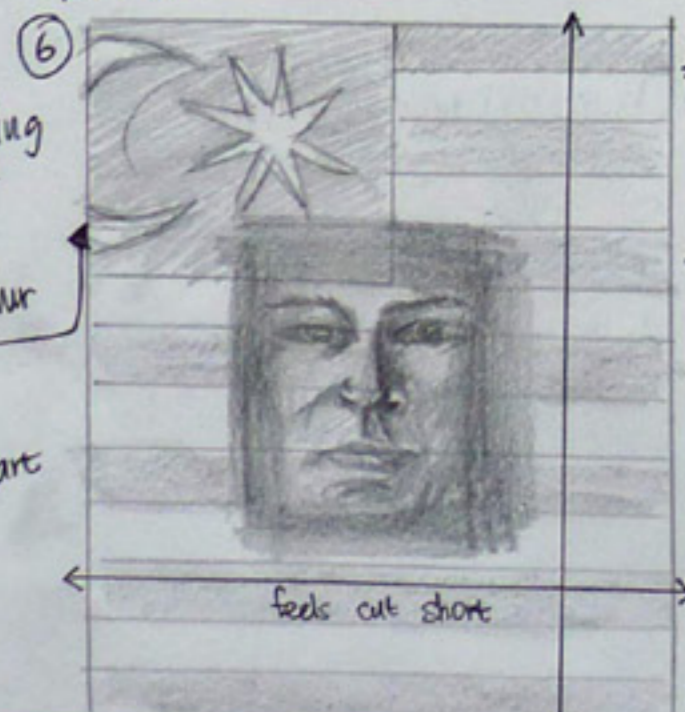


4 Having the face at position 4 would create unevenness as the top would be denser whereas the bottom would be a little more empty.

3 In this position it can be almost symmetrical in terms of density as it is opposite the canton. However I feel it wouldn't make much sense to have it there because the idea is that the 'person' is surrounded or enveloped by the flag which means that having the face there would be slightly off the concept. It also seems slightly detached from the overall painting.

2 If the face was in position 2, it fits the concept of being surrounded by the country and its culture (the flag). I also like it in the center because it keeps the whole piece in place and doesn't make it seem like separate bits on one piece.

Position 5 seems similar to the position 4 in a way that it makes the whole piece seem unbalanced due to the <sup>blue</sup> canton.



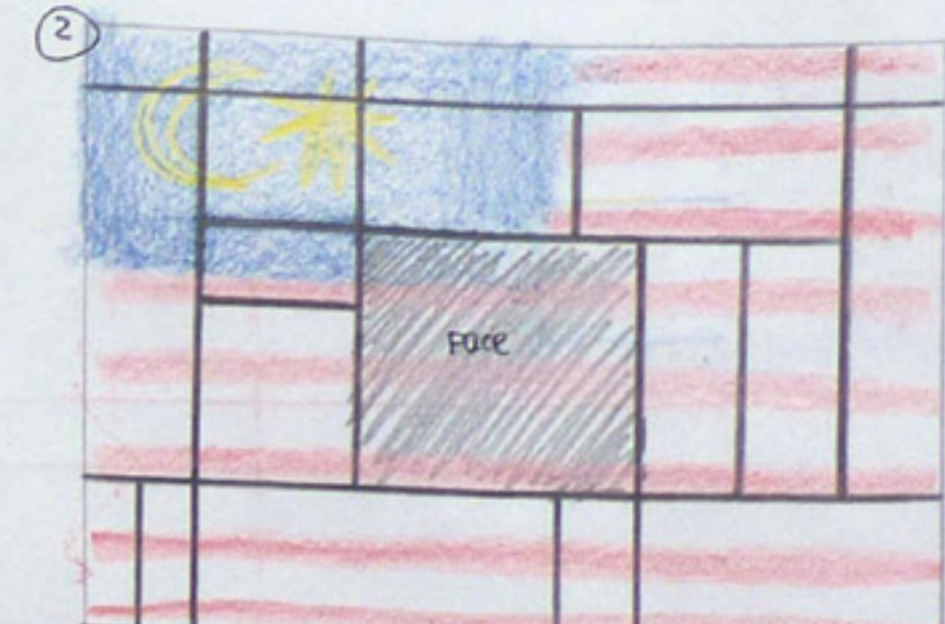
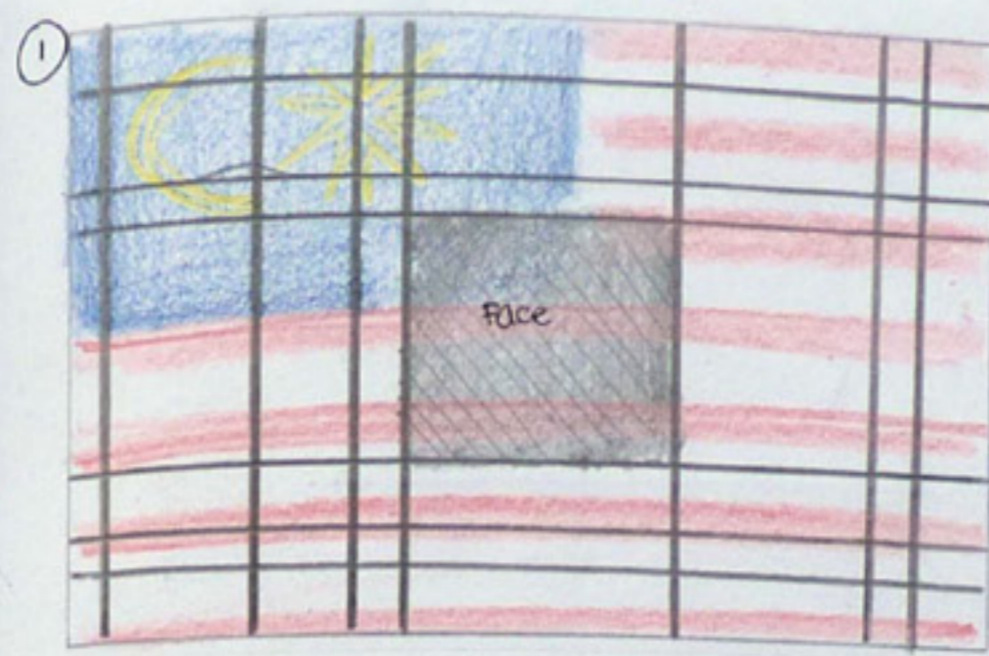
6 Furthermore, a lot of the strict, straight lines would be lost as it feels that, horizontally, everything had been cut short. So everything, vertically, feels elongated which would affect the flag's natural dimensions.

It would also mean that the flag would only be a section of the flag or a wrapped flag leading to more stripes → I don't want to change anything about the flag. ∴ NO.

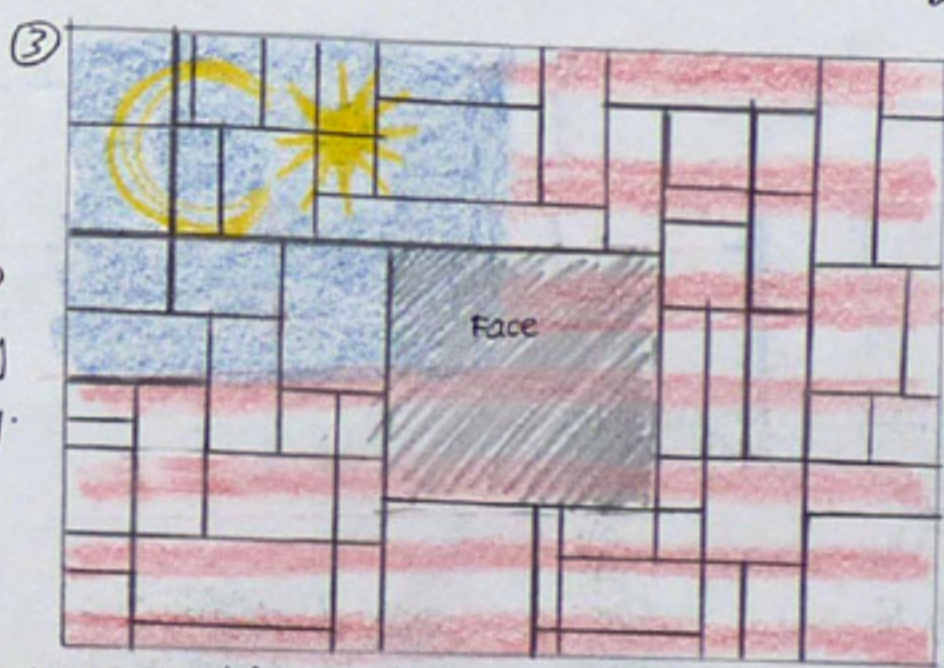
I also considered the idea of printing my final piece in portraits instead of landscape but I just think that defeats the point of having the 'Jalur Gemilang' fully and complete. This format would make the flag highly unproportional and it would conceal part of the canton and crescent.

\* I have chosen position 2 in portrait format because it ensures that I get the natural size and dimension of the flag and also the face in position 2 allows the piece to feel like one whole and avoid the piece feeling unbalanced.

Division Lines: (Please note that I will not be drawing the faces in therefore will be substituted by a <sup>shaded</sup> box)



1 Is the denser close lines that go either fully horizontal or vertical and ~~and~~ creates squares between them. This design is more towards Mondrian's Rhythm of black lines. As mentioned in the other two I am trying to avoid over-doing and over complicating everything.

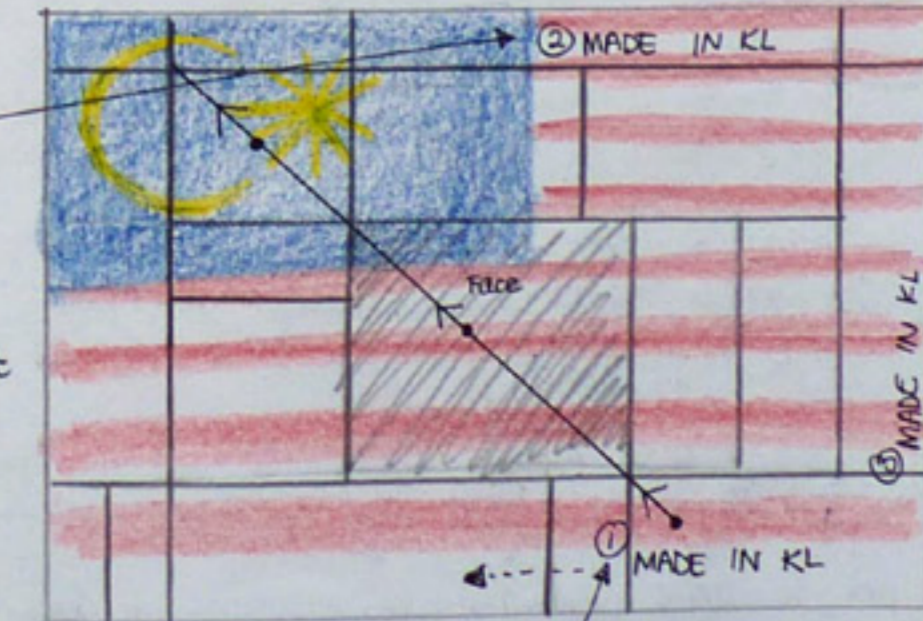


I really like the layout of no. 2 because it reminds me of the conventional Mondrian piece. And instead of having uniform squares, this layout allows the squares to be created in its own accord and also it doesn't feel too complicated where it goes too far and looks over crowded. It looks and feels simple but will still maintain the strict, straight lines/divisions.

3 This layout is definitely very dense and highly complicated if it was to be blown up to a much larger scale. I think it would take away the feel of simplicity yet accuracy/strictness of the lines because there is simply too much going on.

Therefore I am choosing layout 2 because of its simplicity and ability to emphasise the flag instead of covering it in a complicated mess. It also allows the face to meld into it without looking out of place.

Made in KL: where would I add the stencil of 'MADE IN KL'?



I was definitely thinking of having the stencil either on the edge of the piece or in a corner.

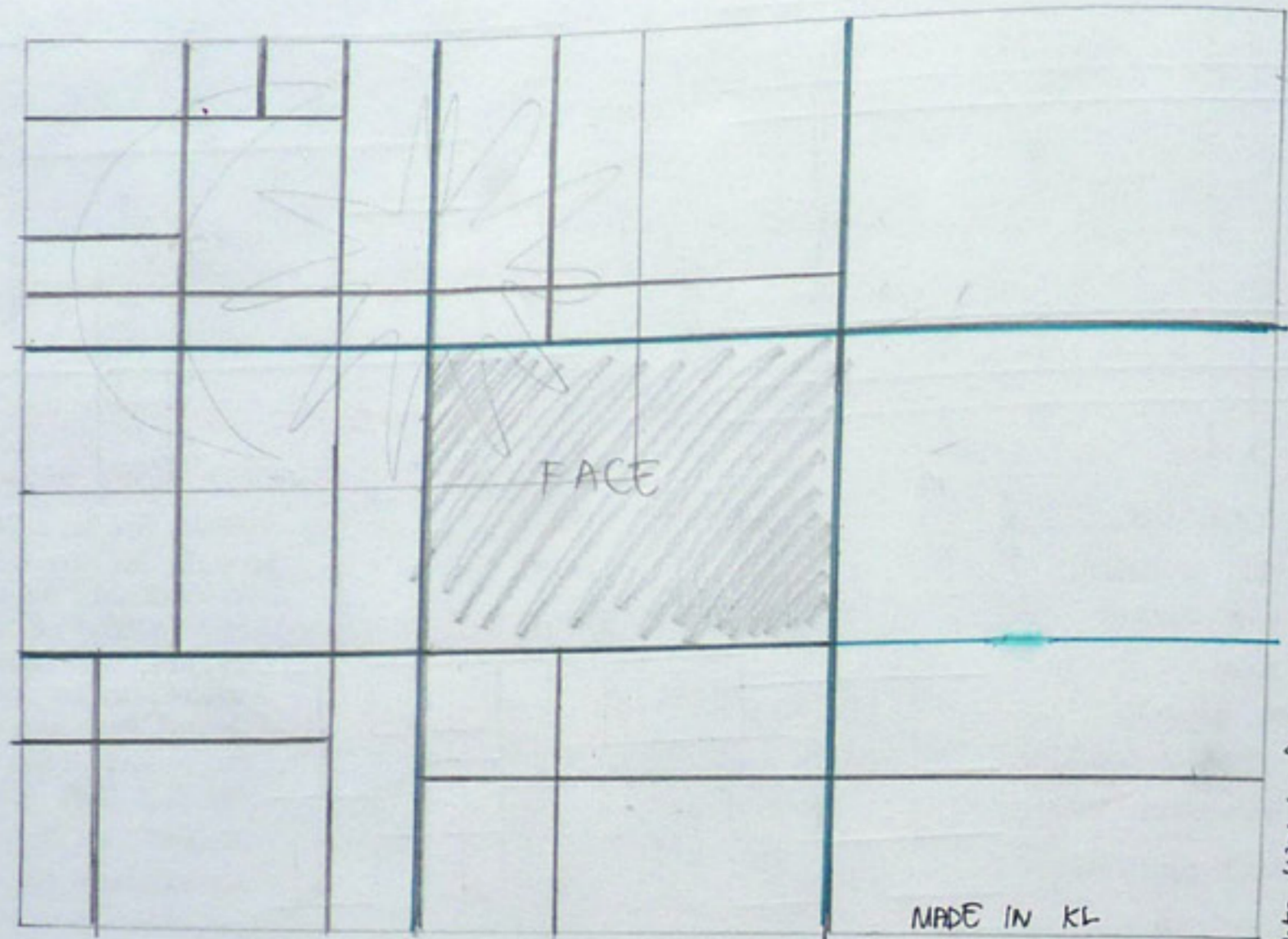
Either way I would like the stencil to be black on a white stripe to really have it pop out. However having it there seems impractical. I want it to feel a part of the piece instead of an addition.

I was thinking of maybe having it vertical but that would mean it would go against the horizontal stripes of the flag which I do not want.

Having it here would somewhat equalise the piece. (demonstrated by the lines) therefore it doesn't look or feel uneven.

# Rules of composition

Lines 2.0: Applying the rule of thirds to my piece.



Note: Will be followed as a guide for final piece.

Here I divided the page into thirds as guides represented by the blue lines. I am attempting to show a gradual deterioration of complexity as simplicity takes over to the right of the piece while yet maintaining the face in the centre of the piece.

## Concept:

The concept behind my piece (which may have been briefly mentioned throughout my developments) is the idea of pride in my country and the freedom it may hold. Malaysia is known for its diverse cultures, races and religions. I wanted to express life in its simplest form using lines and primary colours (Neo plasticism mentioned some pages back) with a twist of using the Malaysian flag amidst the horizontal and vertical lines. The face represents mankind/humans and the way the flags surrounds and engulfs the face, in my own interpretation of my hopeful outcome, shows how we are surrounded by our country and everything it is about - whether it be a positive or negative circumstance e.g. corruption in a country could cause lack of freedom of speech or human rights. My final piece is/may be a question to others and blatantly open to interpretation of how one may feel about their own country - Malaysia or not.

I am also choosing to express the whole flag instead of a fragment/section of the flag to really flaunt the flag and everything it may represent and symbolise to me. As I annotated multiple pages back, the different areas of the flag symbolise different things and I wouldn't want any part of that to be effected or disrupted by it being removed.

The darkness and shadows in the face is used to create ambiguity and mystery and therefore it is open to interpretation whether it is seen as a serious face of pride or sorrow which would lead to their relation and perspective of Malaysia and/or other countries.

The lines across my piece go from complex to simple which could be substituted into many political/cultural/economical issues surrounding a country e.g. chaos/corruption vs. order, freedom vs. imprisonment, democracy vs. dictatorship and the list is endless.



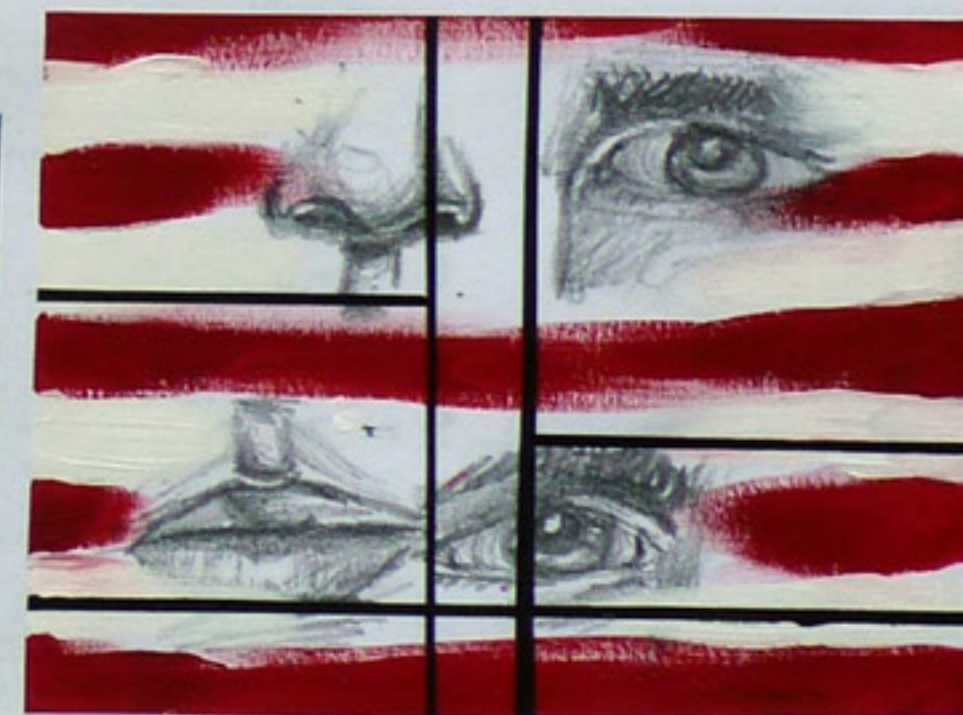
This is currently my facial idea for my final piece. I would, however, like to look at different possible ideas to my facial section that will be surrounded by the flag.

I particularly like this idea because, when blown up to a larger scale, it creates the effect as though the face is emerging from behind the darkness and into the light. However it could also have the opposite effect of a person sinking into the darkness and getting engulfed by whatever the darkness may symbolise to someone.

Here, instead of just having the face surrounded by black, have the flag stripes come through fully to create the effect of the face being surrounded by the flag instead. In addition to that I thought that perhaps I could incorporate the Maudian lines straight through and into the face. However I feel it looks as though the face is flat and has less depth because it is on the same level as the flag.



This is the same concept as the top one except I bring the Maudian lines are brought straight down and across the face. This once again creates the same flatness as the face is on the same level as the flag and lines.



And here, instead of having the face as one form I divided them apart and had the flag AND lines all incorporated into the face. However, I don't quite know if it would have the same effect of a full face would have. Note: This would also have the Maudian lines incorporated into it and also the flag would blend into

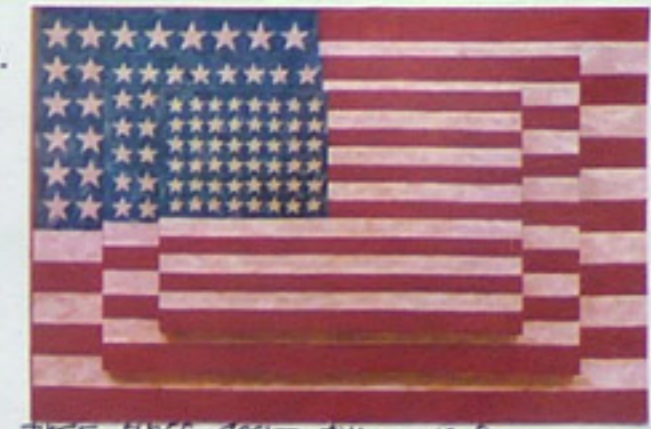




From the beginning I was already highly influenced by Kevin Nguyen's work and I really desired to improve my painting and technique. I believe that Nguyen really helped me achieve my outcome. Further on I discovered Gabriel Lipper whose work I found was similar to Nguyen's work. They both really gave me a structural framework for me to develop my technique and ability to paint my faces and portraits. Nguyen, in particular, helped with the developments of the eyes and nose as I find those to be the hardest to create properly and not make it look too dimensional. Lipper was interesting as I experimented with the different colours and how it affects the shadows and highlights on the face. Ultimately, unlike Kris Knight's paintings, I found that my 'face', so to speak, is in that of a slight edgy look which looks smoother but still has the critical details to really make the features and emotions pop. I found that Nguyen and Lipper's work were slightly monotonous in the sense that the faces were neutral and therefore had no spark with the emotion. This is where Kris Knight was introduced when I was highly influenced by the piercing emotions found in the eyes of each portrait. The gleam in each electric coloured eye is so strong and keeps me intrigued and glued to their faces. It also made me realize that messiness was not my preferred path which therefore led to my messy brush strokes compared to the smooth blend of soft skin tones in Knight's work. What I intended was to add a sprinkle of intensity in my portrait to bring out some emotion rather than leave it in a blank stare. I believe I had successfully added a hint of seriousness and hope that it can translate into others. I believe I have successfully engaged my character by the surrounding darkness to really bring the face out amidst the black. The shadows and dark areas on the face create ambiguity and mystery and also, the gender is not specified therefore hints at androgyny to allow my face/portrait to be perceived as any gender. → links to Knight's influences of androgyny and femininity/masculinity. There is a certain feeling present when I look at Knight's artwork and I love the detail in the eyes, nose and lips and the entire face and how it has been composed as a whole piece (particularly influenced by 'soldado' as I tried to capture the essence of the intent gaze that the character held. How was I achieved that is up to others but I feel satisfied that I had attempted to really hold the emotions in place. Overall these three artists (including some others that are slightly less significant) have strongly influenced my final piece and has shaped it into what it has become.



I was originally attracted to Frederick Childe Hassam's paintings of the American flag in the 'Flag' series and created a response with a portrait within the flag and found that I really liked the outcome I had created. I was also then really interested with the idea of pride in one's country and being grateful for the people you are surrounded by. Hassam had a unique way of expressing his pride for the United States of America by emphasising the flag amidst other flags to symbolize the power and threat that the USA may be to other countries. Therefore I decided to incorporate the pride in country using the flag into my continuing idea of portraits painting. I also researched other artists that dealt with flags and found Jasper Johns' 'Three flags' painting and the meaning behind his, perhaps, bold and patriotic statement. I also found Brent Godfrey and his painting and the idea was that I wanted to see the different approaches different artists had on the very same flag. I tried to create my own approach by having a black background and having the flag layered onto which gave it that dirty, slightly worn out look which is what I was aiming for. The dirty, worn out look signifies the years that have passed and how long my own country has been its own country independently. I also intended on displaying the entire flag to show off the whole flag rather than sections or parts cut off. In addition to that, I was also influenced by Jasper Johns' piece called 'Numbers in colour' which linked to his three flags piece. → further links to layering and colours.



# Making Connections: my final piece

Kevin Nguyen: JIRO: 2010



Kris Knight: 2010



Soldado: 2010



On the actual day of producing my final piece, it didn't sit right in my gut to add the stencil of 'MADE IN KL' because I felt I didn't want to disrupt my piece by adding an extra bit of information that seems slightly out of context and may seem out of place. However I still added Babycat as my main connection as it made me realize that I didn't particularly need it. Babycat also influenced me with the concept of layers and stencils therefore it is fair to say that Babycat was an artist.



Mondrian's work has been a great influence to my structural outcome and the lines that symbolize the very raw and bare translation of life; vertical/horizontal lines and primary colours. (Neo plasticism) And I wanted to follow through with that idea and incorporate it into the flag which conveniently is made of primary colours. I had the lines go from complex to simple across my piece from left to right. Mondrian's other pieces also allowed me to come to a conclusion for my compositional ideas and applying it to the rule of thirds and having them played in different directions. I believe it was well translated into my final piece as the strict lines are clear and crisp.

