

Comparative Study

The background of the slide is a collage of three artworks. On the left is a white lace dress with intricate patterns. In the center is a self-portrait of a woman with a thorn necklace and a hummingbird. On the right is a blue-toned painting of a figure holding a guitar.

Within the community of painters and artists, there always seems to remain a gap between realism and surrealism. My comparative study focuses on the analysis of the works of three artists: international artists Pablo Picasso and Frida Kahlo, and local artist Ann Baer. Through “Self Portrait 1901 “The old Guitarist” by international artist Pablo Picasso, “Self portrait with thorn necklace and hummingbird” and “The two Fridas” by international artist Frida Kahlo, and by local artist Ann Baer’s “Michael an unfinished symphony” I have carefully studied the formal qualities, intentions and context of their pieces of work.

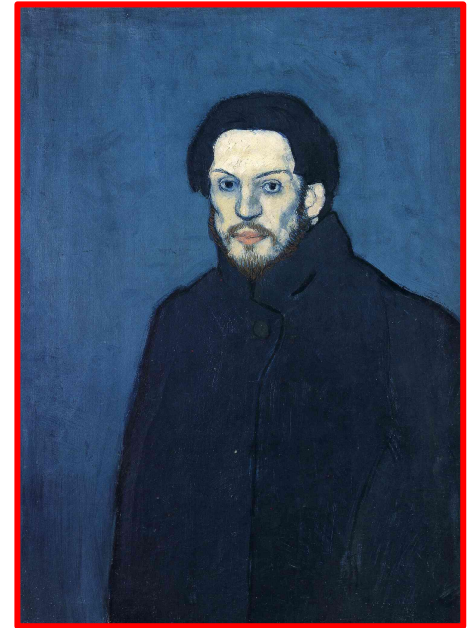
Susana Flores

Evolution of Cultural Significance

Pablo Picasso is arguably the most dominant and influential artist of the first half of the twentieth century. Picasso was associated most with the pioneering of cubism, along side the artist George Braque, he also invented collage and also made huge contributions to Symbolism and Surrealism.

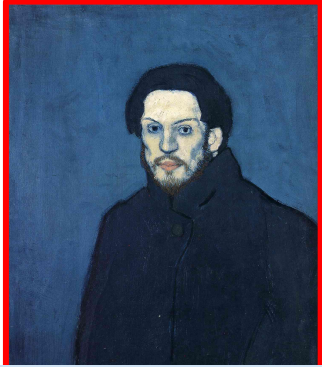
Between the years 1900 and 1904 Picasso began his 'Blue Period' in which melancholy blue tones took over his artwork. During this time in his life was kicking off to a difficult start when one of his friends committed suicide. He soon began to sign his work with his mother's maiden name 'Picasso'. He then spent the next four years of his life hopping between Paris and Barcelona without truly staying anywhere permanently.

Picasso was an innovator and much of what characterised his work was his own, ability to be at the forefront of developing the new artistic style of Cubism between the years 1907 and 1908. A form which he remoulded and reshaped continuously, but which remained prominent in his work throughout his life.



Self Portrait 1901

Analysis of Formal Qualities



Self Portrait 1901

In between the years 1901-1904, Pablo Picasso began what would later be known his blue period. Within picasso's blue period, Picasso painted in monochromatic blue. During this time, Picasso spent time in Spain where he witnessed pain and agony in the streets, this later became a huge inspiration for his work. His work seemed to reflect relative poverty and instability. The subject matter during this time was primarily beggars and derelicts. Picasso was always known for his disproportionate figures, however during this time he made the figures more exaggerated to emphasize their lack of health due to poverty

Picasso was very open to artistic influences around him, and events of these years would have a major effect on his works in the following years. Picasso later responded to the new avant-garde developments of the Fauve painters in Paris by exploring new directions himself, creating his groundbreaking style after his blue period.

"I started painting in blue when I learned of Casagemas' death"

The blue tones are used as signs of melancholy. In one of picasso's works he painted his good friend Carlos Casagemas. Upon examining it, the blues indeed give a peaceful feel, peaceful enough to the point of a melancholy feel. A common connector in his pieces during these pieces is the shades of yellow in the works. The incorporation of yellow add a hidden message, which is hidden happiness within the subjects.



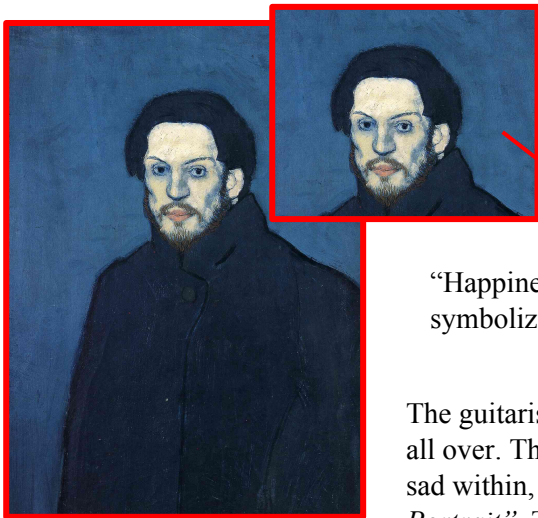
The Old Guitarist 1903-1904



Death of Casagemas

Interpretation of Function and Purpose

“Self Portrait” and “The old guitarist” by Picasso were staple pieces of Picasso’s Blue Period. Due to the name of the period, it is easy to infer that the element of color is very present in these pieces. Colors are used to evoke emotions. In this specific time period, Picasso was going through a depression, therefore the color he gravitated towards was blue; blue is associated with the feeling of sadness. A main focus for Picasso was having the audience able to see the monochrome within all the pieces. Value is demonstrated through a much more effective method due to his use of blending. The blending of shadows and different hues on the men showcase his abilities to create great detail.

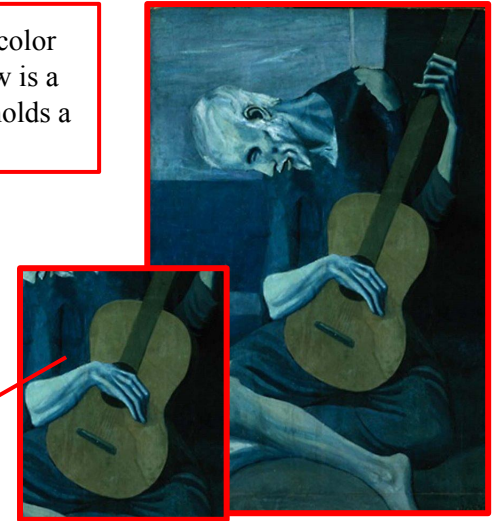


Self Portrait 1901

In contrast to the melancholy feel of the blue, the color yellow is evoking a sense of happiness. The yellow is a connector between all the pieces. The yellow also holds a hidden meaning of happiness.

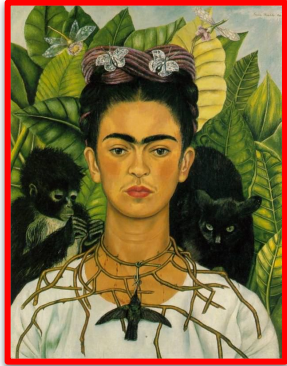
“Happiness” or yellow is focused on the face symbolizing that happiness is within him.

The guitarist is completely in blue symbolizing that he is sad all over. The face of the man is also in blue meaning that he is sad within, contrasting the idea of internal happiness in “Self Portrait”. The yellow of the guitar is symbolizing the only thing bringing the man happiness.



The Old Guitarist 1903-1904

Evolution of Cultural Significance



Surrealism is a style of art that was developed in Europe in the 1920s. Part of the inspiration for this art style was the newly discovered science of psychology . Psychology taught that the mind is divided into two parts, the conscious and the subconscious. Surrealist artists often produce art by letting their minds free from the conscious. Surrealist artists were interested in depicting the world through their dreams, nightmares, desires, and imaginations. Frida Kahlo was never interested in subject matter that was derived from dreams, instead her art was more autobiographical. "They thought I was a Surrealist, but I wasn't. *I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality.*"(Kahlo) Although Kahlo never got inspiration from dreams like other surrealists, she was still identified as one, because her art contained many dream like symbols.



Frida Kahlo was the woman who painted brutal self-portraits, and she was also a wife who endured miscarriages and a broken marriage. Most importantly, she was the patient who tolerated dire, physical pain and underwent more than 35 operations throughout her life. Traumatic, physical and psychological events from childhood all the way to adulthood were a huge influence. In addition to these traumatic personal issues. Kahlo's subject matter also revolved around national identity. Her mixed ancestry of mexican and german provided a huge source of subject matter. She has now become a rich part of mexican culture and a huge cultural icon. Her bold artwork and strong political views also made her a symbol of feminism.

Interpretation of Function and Purpose

Black Monkey

Diego, Frida's husband, had given this monkey to Frida as a gift. The monkey has a very distant look on his face, this is how Diego treated her. The monkey is holding back the necklace, causing her neck to bleed. This is representation of the pain Diego continued to cause her; Diego was always holding her back and causing her pain.

Necklace

Sinking into her skin representing the pain Diego caused in the relationship. The thorn necklace she wears could also be a representation of Jesus's thorn crown, which was worn while he dragged and crucified. This ties into the idea of resurrection within herself.



Self Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird, 1940

Butterflies

The butterflies on Kahlo's head have been interpreted as symbols of her own personal resurrection, leading some to believe that Kahlo is comparing herself directly to Jesus Christ.

Black cat

Black cats are a common symbol for misfortune and bad luck. The idea that it is on her shoulders means that she always has misfortune on her.

Dead Hummingbird

A bird is often symbolize freedom and life. Especially hummingbirds which are colorful and full of life. But in this painting the hummingbird is black and lifeless.

Facial Expression

Her expression is calm and solemn. It also seems she is patiently enduring the pain.

Interpretation of Function and Purpose



5. Here the bond is purposely clamped down on the literal bond with a hermostat



2. This bond is emphasised by the vein that is uniting the two Fridas.

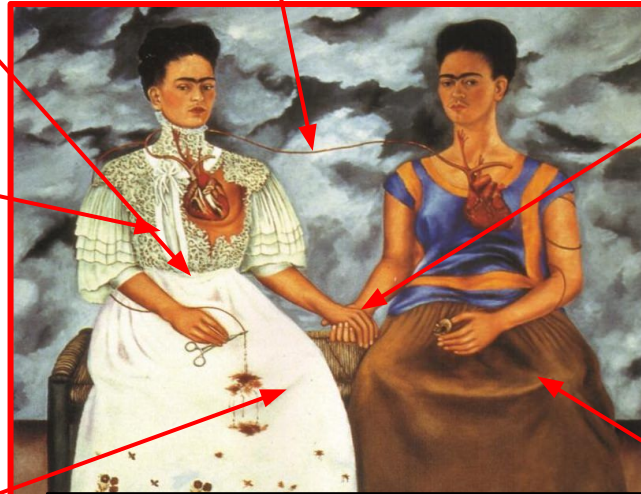
The Two Fridas 1939



1. The two fridas are clasping hands to symbolize a strong bond between her dual feelings towards her husband Diego Rivera. Along with this, the bond is symbolizing her identity issues.



3. One side of the bond is broken and weakened by the exposed broken heart



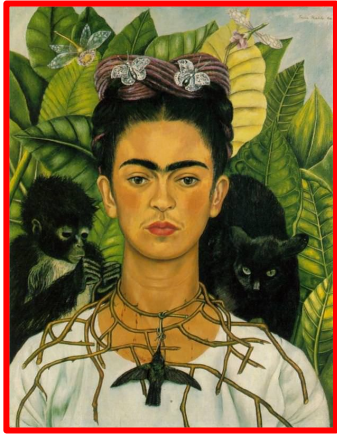
On one side, Frida is wearing a traditional Mexican costume. On the other side she is wearing a more modern European brown dress. This represents her identity issues due to her biracial roots.



4. The other side of the bond is strong, where one Frida is longing for her lost love. The vein that is connected to her heart is directly feeding to the small portrait of her ex lover.



Analysis of Formal Qualities



Her most famous paintings refer back to her relationship with Diego. Both pieces to the right contain symbols such as the black cat and monkey, thorn necklace, picture of Diego, two different outfits, and a hermostat. These are symbols that are all tied back to Diego. Using personal tragedies both physical and psychological, Frida combines her realistic style of painting to produce images that were too emotionally raw and to some, visually disturbing.

Her art was dominated by self portraits that are showing her suffering. One thing that was observed is that her facial expression in most her paintings is similar in the way her face is always calm and solemn and it seems that she in enduring the pain she is experiencing.

“I paint myself because I am so often alone and I am the subject I know best.” Kahlo



Kahlo's use of symbolism and surrealism creates a powerful message on what she lived through. In Frida Kahlo's, *The Two Fridas* she illustrates heartbreak and Surrealism.

Evaluation of Cultural Significance

Ann Baer is an artist from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, her most famous art works consist of sculptures that are tall and elegant. Baer used refurbished wooden objects and paints them using a glossy, colorful base coat. Although her most famous pieces are sculptural, painting is still a big part of her style and technique. Baer's signature is her technique for "stroking" her colors, combining hues which again are not to be blended out. This reflects her love for color.

Baer's technique and style remains consistent among the rest of the of her work. The use of multiple colors within flesh tone is used in the paintings to the right. The subjects in her paintings are often done in cool tones. Baer does this with the intention to emphasize the subject against the background and surroundings.



Michael an unfinished symphony

For the most part, the subject matter for Baer is troubled people or people whom she had rough relationship with. The inspiration for this piece was her huge love for her son. She used to this piece to emphasize her feelings and attachment to him especially because he had a drug problem.



Walk softly and carry a big stick.



Brooke

Analysis of Formal Qualities

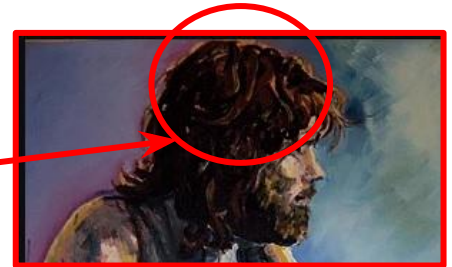
Baer does not stick to the “traditional” skin tones, rather she uses her own technique by setting her own hues by not fully blending the colors. Therefore one of her most noticeable aspects in her technique is the use of color. Blending is defined as hiding the sharp edges between colors to create a smooth transition within the value.

However, in “*Michael and unfinished symphony*”, Baer does the complete opposite of the definition, and makes it work well. Where highlights would normally be seen, white patches are used to represent this.



There is a clear separation between the warm tone of the body and the hair of Michael to the cool tone of the background. This is an example of contrast and emphasis. Upon closer inspection, it's as though warmth is bouncing off the man's body.

The drastic change of color not only shows the degree of value from light to dark, but it also is used to create texture. Within the painting, Michael's hair looks “shaggy” due to the multiple strokes of light and dark going in different directions.



Michael and unfinished symphony

Comparing Artistic Style And Technique



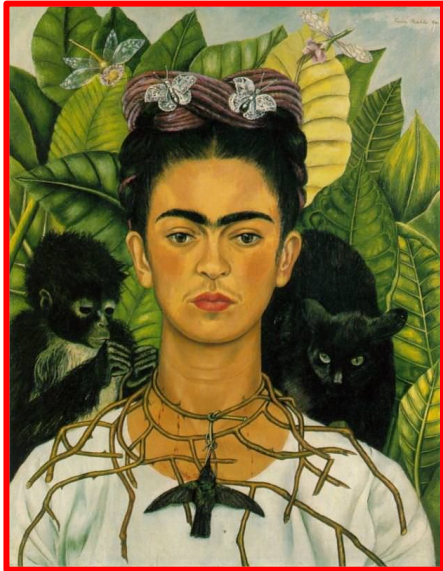
Michael an Unfinished symphony
Ann Baer

- Picasso used monochrome so there is very little use of color whereas Baer uses a range of color.
- The blending in *The old guitarist* is a lot softer compared to the little use of blending in *Michael an unfinished symphony*.
- The background color of the pieces are predominately cool toned therefore the tone of the works imply a more melancholy feeling.
- In both paintings, the subject are men that are seated and seem to be in a tough situation.
- In both pieces there is use of props that add meaning to the pieces.
- The subjects are facing to the sides, only showing their profile
- The subjects are facing away and looking into the distance and deep into thought



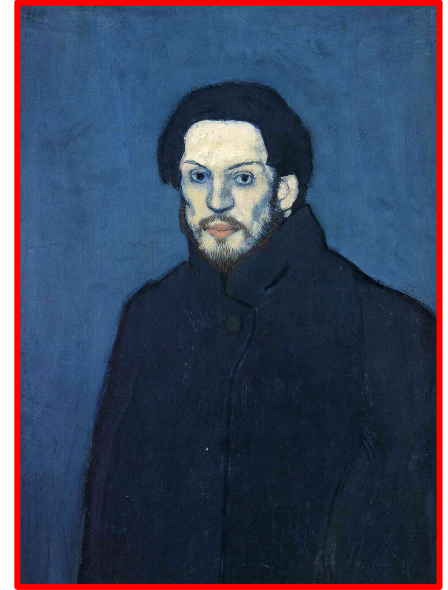
The old guitarist
Pablo Picasso

Comparing Artistic Style And Technique



Self Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird, 1940

- The choice of cool toned colors in Picasso's blue period pieces exhibit the feeling of sadness and solemn. In contrast, Kahlo uses more vivid colors, which in turn evokes a sense of optimism.
- The subjects are facing directly at the audience to draw them in so that they can feel the emotion.
- Picasso was only twenty years old at the time, but he appears considerably older in this portrait. Frida as well looks older. This could be because they are both going through hardships.
- Both Picasso's and Frida's self-portraits have faces that are solemn and calm, symbolizing their endurance of pain.
- The use of blending in both pieces creates a highly realistic subject.



Self Portrait 1901

Formal Introduction To Own Works

The two Susis



Blue boy is a part of a triptic painting painted by me. I was inspired by exploring the unique stages of oneself. Inspired by the periods significant in Pablo Picasso's art, the piece tells a story and demonstrates the duality of oneself through time. In these portraits, I am facing the viewer with a background of paint pours, meant to represent chaos.

This piece is focusing on the portrayal of a similar piece by Frida Kahlo titled “The two Fridas.” My piece is representing a modern take on the expression of different personalities. “The two Susis” imposes great significance because it expresses the same struggles that Frida went through; with the abandonment of a lover and a sense of abandonment issues.

This digital painting, Self-Portrait with dogs, was painted by me. It draws lots of interests, since it contains so many aspects which are symbolic to Frida Kahlo. In this portrait, I am facing the viewer with a background of large green leaves behind her. On both sides of my shoulders, are the pets of my ex significant other. My expression is calm and solemn. It also seems she is confident with her gaze. I put so many symbolic creatures in this painting. I was not painting a realistic scene but using these symbolic elements to express my feelings. This is a painting about my resurrection after a break up



Blue Boy



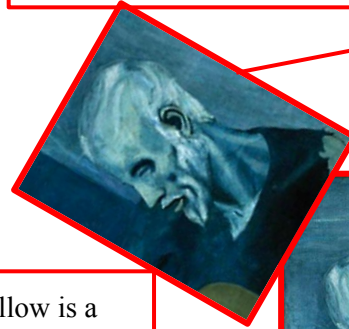
Self Portrait with Dogs

Connection To My Own Art

My inspiration for this piece was Pablo Picasso and the the different methods and techniques throughout the Blue Period were implemented in my self portrait. Immediately I was heavily inspired by the fact that Picasso went through periods where he only painted in monochrome based on his mental health. Picasso's best friend committed suicide, while this happened Picasso was in Spain witnessing so much pain and agony on the streets. Later the things and people he witnessed were inspiration for many of his paintings. This all hit Picasso very hard and he fell into a depression. I am in a way copying this idea. *Blue Boy* is meant to show me during a time where I went through a deep depression, hence the blue monochrome of the painting and the sad expression emphasised by the tears. Also meant to represent my new found self, similar to how Picasso found a new art style that he is known for.

The use of blending in both pieces creates a highly realistic subject.

The yellow is a connector between the pieces. The yellow also holds a hidden meaning of happiness. The subject is completely blue with a small fraction of yellow.



Blue Boy
Susana Flores

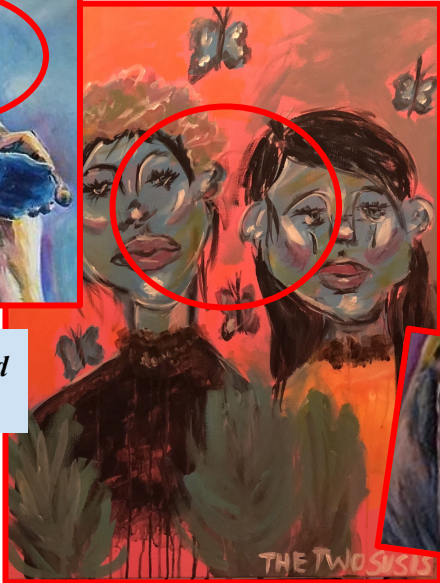


The old guitarist
Pablo Picasso

Connection To My Own Art



The two Susis



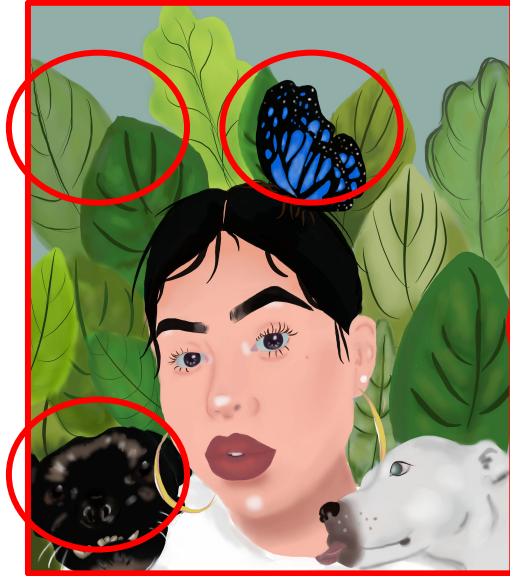
Michael an unfinished symphony



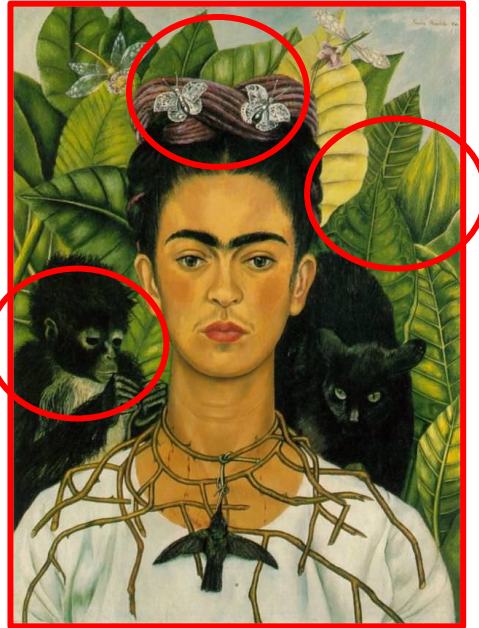
For my piece *"The two Susis"* my artistic inspirations is the art movement of Impressionism . Imprestional artists used the technique of excessive color and brush strokes, which is exactly the same technique I pursued. The techniques used are actually quite similar to the techniques used my the artist Ann Baer in the piece *"Michael an unfinished symphony."*

In both pieces, there is no use of blending, the colors all have clear separation and highlights and shadows are emphasised by extreme blacks or whites.

Connection To My Own Work



Self-Portrait with Dogs

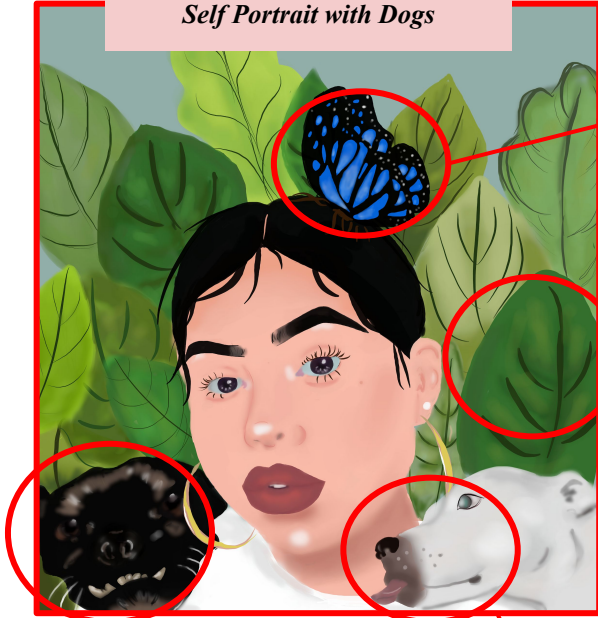


*Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace
and Hummingbird, 1940*

This digital painting, *Self-Portrait with dogs*, was painted by me. It draws lots of interests, since it contains so many aspects which are symbolic to Frida Kahlo. In this portrait, I am facing the viewer with a background of large green leaves behind me much like Frida. On both sides of my shoulders, are the pets of my ex significant other. My expression is calm and solemn similar to Frida. It also seems I am more confident with my gaze. I put so many symbolic creatures in this painting. I was not attempting to paint a realistic scene but using these symbolic elements to express my feelings. Both paintings are about resurrections after a break up

Connection To My Own Work: Symbolism

Self Portrait with Dogs



Butterflies:
Butterflies are often seen as symbols of change,
The butterfly are symbols of our own personal resurrection.

Plants:
The vibrant plant backgrounds symbolizes new life

Pets:
Both artworks include pets that symbolize ex lovers.
They are placed on both sides of the shoulders much like an angel and devil.



Self Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird, 1940

Connection To My Own Art

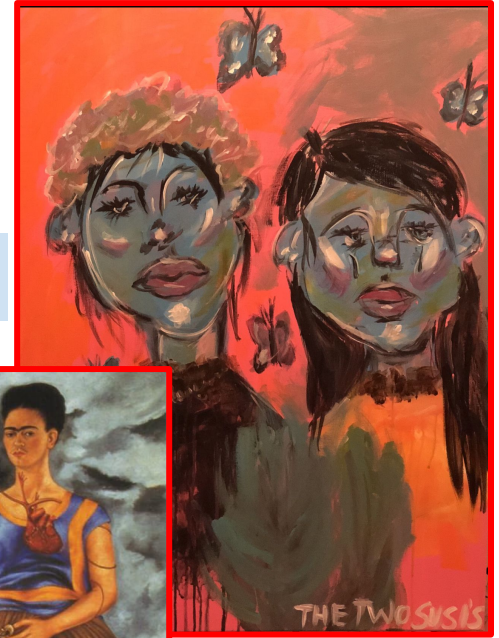
Similarities

This piece is focusing on the portrayal of a similar piece by Frida Kahlo titled “The two Fridas.” My piece is representing a modern take on the expression of different personalities. “The two Susis” imposes great significance because it expresses the same struggles that Frida went through; with the abandonment of a lover and a sense of abandonment issues.

Differences

- “The two Susis” does not have the same positioning as “The two Fridas”
- My piece is done in a less realistic way and uses an array of hues to create shadow and highlight, where as Frida uses warm tone colors and traditional blending to create a hyper realistic painting.

The Two Fridas 1939



The two Susis

