



المدرسة الأمريكية الدولية
American International School



IBO DP Visual Arts Culminating Exhibition Catalogue

2019-2021 Mrs Angie Hani

ARTIST STATEMENT – Mariam Abdal

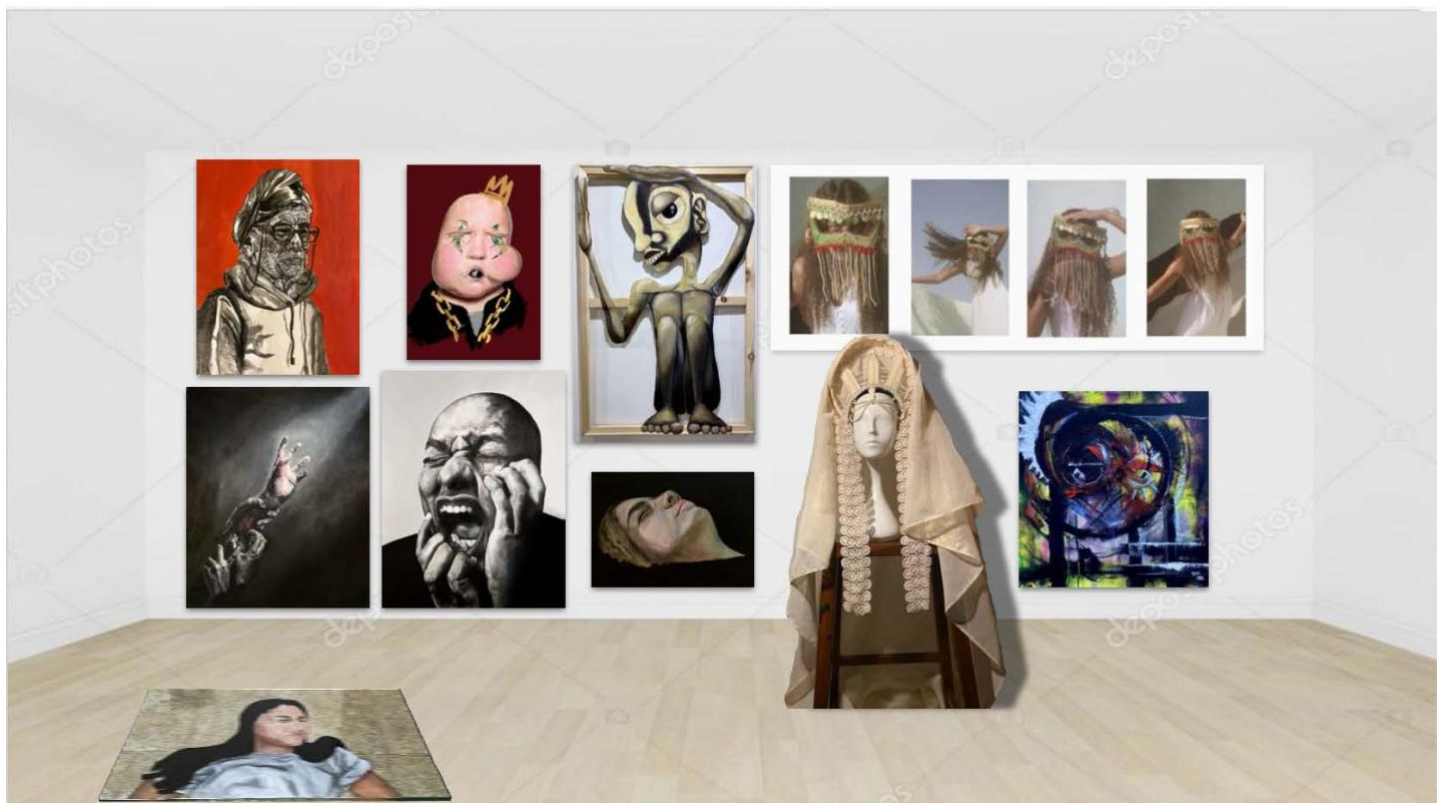
The central concept behind my exhibition highlights the complexity of society through the world of extremes. Specifically, I explore how living in a world of extremes brings about self and social awareness. After analyzing my exhibition pieces as a whole, I noticed a common theme of self-reflection and social awareness as opposed to my intended concept. Initially, I began DP art with the intention of focusing on the concept of identity. However, I came to realize that I had not yet grasped my own identity. Depicting such a complex topic without an established understanding of it would limit my artistic message and voice. I chose to then shift my focus to the "world of extremes" because of my inherent interest in society and human behaviour, along with internal and external relationships. We live in a world of extremes, whether it may be extreme war, suffering and hatred, or love and happiness. Growing up in such an extreme world ultimately shapes our individualistic identities. We begin to formulate our morals and beliefs around on the dynamic society and environments we are surrounded by. I decided to explore the extremes that ultimately impact my everchanging identity and have led me to who I am today, which can be seen through the progression of my artworks.

My selection of works portrays the progression of my mindset as a result of the exploration of my two-year concept. My first piece *Chameleon* is a scattered perception of identity and my last, *The Mindful Observer*, being the mindset that I occupy at the moment. I began by highlighting extremes such as human greed, pain and ego; all of which, I had deemed the faults of society. However, as I started to pay more attention to my mindset, I began to realize that the way I perceived society and the world was my subconscious way of mirroring how I truly felt about myself. The inevitable cases of human suffering rear the ugly head of greed, pain and ego; the very qualities of myself I despised. This spiked my interest in self-enlightenment. Through the exploration of extremes, I became more self-aware and socially conscious, whilst also strengthening the grasp of my identity and becoming more in line with the person I want to be. Thus, my artworks became a form of self-reflection. I looked within myself and to my environment and highlighted the toxicity I saw. As such, my artworks took a turn to the portrayal of matters such as extreme submission, social constructivism and fake innocence. These concepts allowed me to understand my role in society better and apply my intended messages to myself. Through this series of self-reflection and social observations, I became more in tune with myself. Accordingly, my final pieces exhibit extreme balance and extreme mindfulness.

In terms of materials and techniques, I mainly focused on oil paints with a hyper-realistic technique. This allowed me to focus on the conceptual portrayal of the artworks as opposed to rushing the techniques with a medium like acrylics. I explored all dimensions and personally enjoyed four-dimensional photography the most because of the deep and vulnerable connections I was able to make with my subjects. The materials I used had an impact on the meaning of the work; for example, the materials I used in my sculptural headpiece held symbolic weight. My exhibition aims to immerse the audience into each artwork as characters within the story. For example, my glass piece of a doormat, *Not Your Doormat*, is displayed on the floor. This forces the viewer into the role of the oppressor and makes them reflect on the role they have in the story and apply it to their life. Another example is *The Mindful Observer*, to which the symbolic use of a fence adds a third perspective to the concept. The fence places the viewer as an observer looking into a scene, forcing them into the position of their higher self. When presenting this body of work, I intend to display the pieces in order of self-development and enlightenment in order to present the journey I went through.

Word Count: 681

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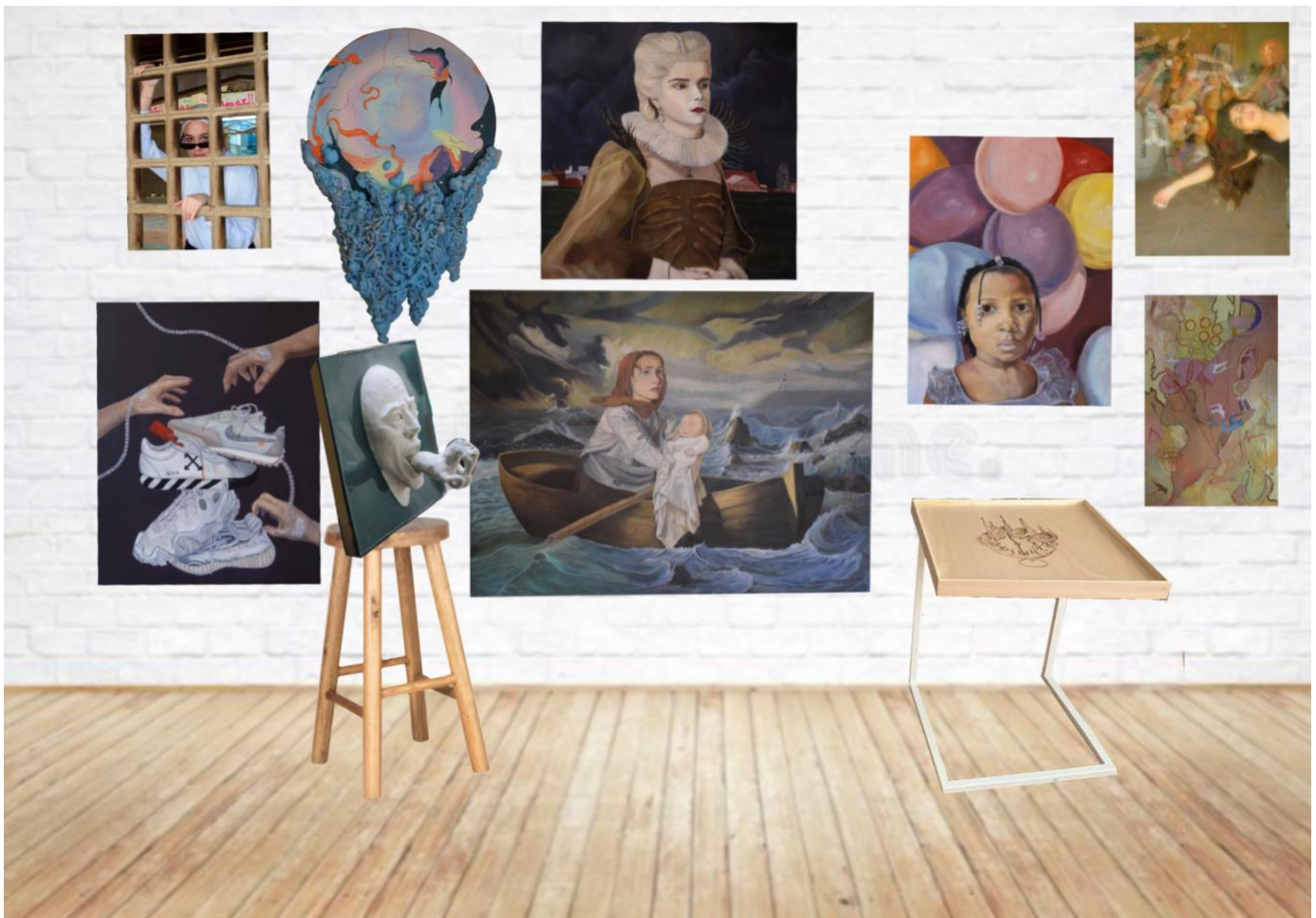
Artist Statement – Farah AlGhunaim

I believe that art is an artist's commentary on the world around them. It is a means of reflecting their complex inner thoughts in a simplified manner using visual representation. With that in mind, I used my art exhibition to reflect my opinion on societal taboo issues that surround me in my community. Through using subtle symbolic motifs, the audience can deduce its accordance to their own daily lives and find an attachment to the work I produce. I can build a connection with my audience which attracts them and engages in their thinking. The connection between an artwork and a community is key to making an impactful body of work, hence it has been a driving force in my exhibition. My work forces individuals to question the arbitrary structures and norms placed by the society around them and question their existence by not giving into conformity with no justification. I begin my process by observing my society, then basing my topics on issues that stand out and need a certain commentary. Through this process I can achieve my aim to have viewers see themselves through my work. My body of work is solely influenced by the community and society that surrounds me, as I aim to make an impact on the mentality of my audience and how they observe the world around them. My artworks represent my opinions and stance which is bound to attract the opposing perspective which is when interesting arguments can be sparked.

Georgia O'Keeffe's work reflects my aim as an artist which is to reveal the unseen and to reveal the familiarity in an unusual manner that draws the audience's attention. Her artwork "Sky above Clouds IV" redefines how we observe our surroundings by presenting the view of the sky from a mind twisting perspective. The contradiction it poses to the audience's perspective is what attracts the audience even more. Just as O'Keeffe mastered this skill, I have used my art to reveal the audience's society in an unfamiliar manner through exaggerating connections and themes.

I think the strongest part of my work is how they chronologically develop deeper and more nuanced messages. This reflects my growth as an artist and my ability to communicate my ideas in a visual manner. This is best reflected with my last piece "Falling into the Abyss", in this abstract artwork I had to rely on a strong incorporation of symbols to communicate my intention. This artwork works to depict the aftermath of a suffocating society that neglects to see past the illusions that one creates to seem intact. This artwork forces the audience to question people's actions and their hidden feelings by urging them to listen more. This abstract piece depicts a story in a very figurative manner, with a large ear in the focus that signifies a girl's urge to be heard. She dangles from a gold earring about to fall because her hope to be heard is the only thing that is stopping her from falling. Clearly the symbols lace together, and as the audience uncovers the meaning of each element, they begin to weave the final story. Each person may interpret the work differently, which is what makes my artwork ever flowing and malleable depending on the eyes that lie on it and the pain and stories they have gone through. To look deeper, past surface level representation, requires the audience to challenge their thinking and accept a moment of contradiction which leads to mental growth.

Similarly, my technical skills have developed from the start of my exhibition. Comparing my first portrait "Pierced Girl" and "Tranquility Giver", it is evident that my confidence in my brushstrokes and color mixing have developed as I attack larger pieces. In "Pierced Girl," my brushstrokes are short and choppy which is evidently shown with the balloons. The girl's skin is not smooth as the pencil lines seep through the transparent layer of paint. However, in "Tranquility Giver," my strokes are smooth as I try to reflect the movement of the waves with fluidity. With my developed skills, I have become more capable of translating my intentions and creating a solidified body of work. DP HL Visual Arts 2019-2021



Artist Statement- Saud AlObaidi

This exhibition portrays the restoration of culture through modernization. This concept has been cooking in my mind ever since I was a child. Due to my upbringing abroad, I quickly learned that I was responsible for living through my culture and heritage even while being put through a limiting situation. Also thanks to my multi-national school, I learned I was an ambassador of my culture therefore, I had to represent it in the best image possible. This responsibility fed my dedication towards living my life through my culture as I did want to feel less than any child who got the chance to grow up surrounded by the culture. However, this also made me face a set of difficulties as I began learning the balance between heritage and development. Through my exhibition, I break down my realization of the way to develop with cultural perseverance. Throughout the development of this concept, I got to learn more about society and the way it functions.

The body of works presented is conceptual artifacts of factors of culture that I, the artist would like to preserve as cultural assets. The reason behind this is the appearance of an uncomfortable wave of westernization across world societies. Westernizing in the name of development and modernization is an inaccurate practice that will only wreck individuality and heritage. The pieces presented are: Textiles on textiles, Everlasting Paths, Henna, The Chants of Sharq, In Ode to Shiyam, Restoration series: Child Innocence, Restoration series: Deteriorated beauty

The materials used to create the pieces of this exhibition range from textiles, to drums, paints, photography, henna, and thrifted material all over. The materials used are sentimental to the concept as they are materials that don't require many modern techniques or technologies. Instead, the pieces are developed using improvised techniques. The section of works will depict the aspects of the clash between culture and development that I faced in my life so far.

Through using items and materials that are heavily embedded within Kuwaiti culture, I am able to quickly catch the eye of those linked to the culture in whichever way whether the audience is Kuwaiti or familiar with the culture. Also, through the development of these materials and the manipulation, a strong and unique twist is incorporated that will begin impacting on the conceptual vision of the pieces.

Although this exhibition ranges from pieces that serve as total cultural artifacts to statements made on culture, the main similarities are the uniqueness in technique and development times.



Artist Statement- Quentin Meulien

I wanted my art to portray natural subjects, as that was what I enjoyed drawing. I intended to tie nature and artificial elements together, which lead me to develop my body of work's theme as "The Interactions between Humans and Nature". My intention was to approach my theme from all directions, by portraying both the good and bad interactions humans make with nature.

The reason for choosing this theme was that I always appreciated the presence of nature in my life, due to its majestic appearance and calming atmosphere. I spent my childhood in forests, observing and sketching sceneries. I had the privilege of travelling to many countries, such as Denmark, Iceland, and Japan, giving me the opportunity to experience many contrasting climates, geographic formations, and wildlife, which fueled my passion for nature. Which is why I was taken by surprise when moving from Canada to Kuwait. The lack of nature in daily life was suffocating, and it made me experience the other side of relations between humans and nature, one where humans destroyed nature instead of respecting it. This was not limited to Kuwait as all countries replace natural environments with cities, or exploit resources found. I acknowledged and experienced both sides of the connection between nature and humans, which is why I wanted to portray what I observed into my artworks.

Marco Mazzoni had a significant influence on my artistic growth. Both of us preferred using dry medias for our artworks. I grew my skills in pastels by imitating Mazzoni's techniques, before finding my own style later on. Conceptually, Mazzoni's artworks are inspired by his country's legends of Janas, and other mythical creatures who used nature to either harm or cure others. His concept could be seen as similar to mine, and it inspired me to portray both the good and bad interactions between nature and humans.

My exhibition is organized so that the artworks are positioned into three groups: On the left, there is three artworks that show the good interactions between nature and humans. On the right there is three artworks that show the bad interactions between nature and humans. And in the middle, there is one artwork which acts as a middle ground since it can be seen as a good or bad interaction. This artwork stands out among the others as its interpretation changes based on an individual's personal stance on my theme.

