Artist’s Contextual Statement 2021

(Important: please see 2023 update below)

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My practice is often centred around injustice, which is what spurs me to create work. As an artist, my aim is to have viewers respond to this injustice emotionally; thereby being prompted to act upon it in different ways and contributing to the causes I try to raise awareness of. In order to get viewers emotionally involved, I use my penchant for researching concepts such as the uncanny and the subconscious; which allows me to observe and use the psychological manipulation tactics used in films to activate viewers’ emotional triggers. My research tends to manifest in my work in collage form, whether this is visually, in audio form, or otherwise.

Studying the subconscious, the uncanny and psychological triggers in the world of the arts has also made me sensitive to certain elements of human nature, namely cultural ambiguity and the search for identity. My video collage *HAIR*, for example, explores the meaning of hair from a young Jewish orthodox girl who shaves it as a marital practice to an indigenous girl whose curls are invaded by a blonde lock of hair that won’t come off; whilst my short film *ATLAS* comprises the story of an isolated girl who desperately searches for the definition of the word “mother” in a post-apocalyptic setting.

My past comfort zone media-wise has largely involved surrealist acrylic paintings, whose bounds I began to push by creating wood and greyboard triptychs. Moreover, pandemic-induced distance learning has also pushed me to explore the way I use surrealism and collage through media such as digital drawing, filmmaking, video collage, songwriting and creative writing (which I have also sometimes combined, e.g. by animating the dialogue from a short story I wrote with different fonts, paces, and so on.)

Creating art within an international community of young artists in the age of social media means that I have been able to learn from numerous outside influences: the Freudian psychoanalysis behind Hitchcock and Kubrick’s films, for instance, has allowed me to see how to incorporate the uncanny into my works through a filmmaker’s perspective, thus psychologically influencing my viewers. Hieronymus Bosch has played a great role in my understanding of surrealism, which I choose to elicit by creating a dreamlike setting in my works that may trigger viewers’ subconscious minds.

Additionally, indigenous artists and writers such as Lisa Reihana and Tiffany McDaniel (as well as a significant exhibition on Oceania) have pushed me to connect my sensitivity to injustice topics such as the relationship between the U.S. and some of its island territories and the lack of representation of indigenous peoples in Oceania and the Americas. My overall objective as an artist is to use the feeling my work evokes to kindle an empathetic will in my viewers, which they can use as inspiration to fight for change.

2023 update on my practice

As of 2023, I am inclined to mention that my language around injustice has become more politically and socially neutral. Rather than focusing on injustice from the moral perspective of how I was raised, my artistic and academic works are now mainly centred around socio-political conflicts – I still use Freudian psychoanalysis as a fundamental tool to explore this and tap into viewers’ minds, but the main factor that pushes me to create is the need to bridge socio-political divides in today’s polarised climate (particularly in the Anglosphere’s digital spaces).