

Ways of perceiving (ADDA4023/C)

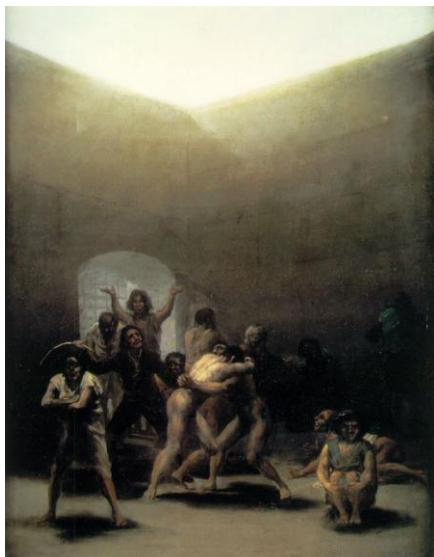
EXHIBITION – Exploring art and mental health.

My Exhibition (exploring art and mental health) is something that I created in an effort to explore the mental health of the artists featured and how their individual struggles with their mental health shaped what they created artistically as well as how this may have allowed them to create in relation to the ways in which they were feeling. Poor mental health is something that a large portion of the population struggles with and although it's something that is slowly being spoken about more, there will never be enough openness or support surrounding this topic as a whole. Speaking from my personal experience there are still a massive number of stigmas that have attached themselves to some mental illnesses causing the individual suffering with them to feel as though they must carry the weight of the assumptions that people make about the kind of person that they are when finding out that you suffer with certain mental health conditions, these can consist of NPD, Anti-Social Personality Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Bipolar, Dissociative Identity Disorder or even much more common conditions like Anxiety and Depression. Some of the artists that I will be touching upon are Francisco De Goya, Vincent Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo and Sara Riches.

In researching and analysing my chosen theme I have found that art is something that can often be used as a useful creative outlet for individuals suffering with their mental health and as well as this, the art that is created by people who struggle with their mental health, intentional or not is a reflection of what they are feeling or have experienced in their life time. Art therapy is something that over the years has become more popular as art making within a therapeutic space is shaped by the mental state of the patient (the person creating the art) allowing the individual creating the work to express themselves freely. "The way in which the art is made, the patients relationship to the art work and his or her relationship to the therapist all reflects the patients hopes and anxieties" the creative process of art therapy is a way for the individual to "give shape to their mental image" this in turn would allow the individual to "connect with and address mental content through implicit representations, which are experienced as physical sensations". I have noticed that people who struggle with mental health often subconsciously gravitate towards art and the idea of creativity and art making as "the ability to be creative and engage in any type of art is an important aspect in reducing stress and increasing well-being. It is also one of the most cost effective, non-invasive, as well as a non-pharmacological technique in reducing negative mental health symptoms." I believe that because of this natural gravitation that people with mental illnesses have towards artistic outlets we have some of the best and most authentic artists in history. "Eric Kandel, a Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist, delves into these questions in books like *The Age of Insight* and *Reductionism in Art and Brain Science*. His work explores the deep connections between art, neuroscience, and

psychology, revealing how art impacts the mind and emotions. These insights have profound implications for mental health.” Leading me to believe that they have always been connected in one way or another. “No great mind has ever existed without a touch of madness” – Aristotle.

Francisco Goya born in Fuendetodos, Aragon, Spain on March 30th, 1746 - April 16th, 1828. Was a Spanish painter and printmaker and was considered to be one of the most important Spanish artists of the late 18th and early 19th century, his works were known to have inspired important artists of both the 19th and 20th century as well as being referred to as one of the last old masters and also one of the first moderns referring to modern art including artistic work produced from between the 1860’s and 1970’s. writings of Goya survived yet still little is known of his thoughts, it is known that he had severe and undiagnosed health issues in 1793 that left the artist deaf leading to him becoming withdrawn and introspective, in turn his work becoming progressively darker and more pessimistic as years went on. The artwork of Francisco Goya that I wanted to include is



Yard with Lunatics (1793-94).

Oil on tinsplate, 43.8 x 32.7cm.

This artwork is extremely powerful despite its relatively small size because of what is depicted within this painting, Goya was inspired to create this painting after “witnessing a scene of lunatics in institutions during his youth in Zaragoza.” The painting is showing a yard that is filled with multiple mentally ill individuals including two men that are fighting while their caretaker is beating them. “Goya’s realistic style helps depict the disturbing reality faced by mentally ill individuals during this time period.”

Vincent van Gogh born in Zundert, Netherlands on March 30th, 1853 – July 29th, 1890. Was a Dutch post-impressionist painter who is one of the most influential and famous figures in the history of western art as well as arguably being the most famous example of an artist who experienced public challenges with mental health. Vincent tried his hand and a range of different career paths before settling on becoming an artist where

he left behind such an extensive body of art “that it might seem as if he spent a lifetime harnessing his skills as a painter. But in reality, the time he dedicated to making art was relatively short-lived, spanning roughly less than a decade, from 1881 to 1890. Van Gogh was 27 by the time he took up art”. Although van Gogh’s mental health is something that researchers are trying to unravel more than a century after his passing a prominent conclusion is that he was absolutely suffering with some type of psychosis, despite this psychosis is a symptom of other disorders rather than being a disorder in itself. “it wasn’t until his 30s that his mental health took a dramatic downturn. On December 23, 1888, van Gogh famously cut off his own ear after an argument with his friend and roommate, Paul Gauguin. Less than 2 years later on July 29, 1890, van Gogh died at age 37 as a result of injuries from a self-inflicted gunshot wound he sustained 2 days earlier.” The art work that I will be including for this artist is



The Starry Night, Saint Remy , June 1889.

Oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.1cm.

This is a beautiful painting that was created after he famously mutilated his own ear, this painting was created during his stay at Saint-Paul-de-Mausole where he voluntarily admitted himself. Inspired by the view from his bedroom window at night in the institution despite most of this being painted during the day. “*The Starry Night* (made in mid-June) is both an exercise in observation and a clear departure from it. The vision took place at night, yet the painting, among hundreds of artworks van Gogh made that year, was created in several sessions during the day, under entirely different atmospheric conditions.”

Frida Kahlo, born July 6th, 1907 in Coyoacan, Mexico – July 13th, 1954 was a Mexican painter known for her many portraits, self-portraits and her work inspired by the nature and artifacts of Mexico. While being diagnosed with minor depression she experienced two major depressive episodes as well as suicide attempts during her lifetime. “Her apparent dissociation and identity issues lead many researchers and historians to believe that Kahlo suffered from an array of mental illnesses – from post-traumatic stress disorder to bipolar disorder to dissociative identity disorder.” I am including



The wounded deer, 1946.

Oil on Masonite, 22.4 x 30cm.

This painting was created where she represents herself as a deer wounded by nine arrows sticking out of her deer body in all directions inspired by a failed spinal surgery which just made her struggle more in life. “Some critics say that Kahlo also wanted to represent the pain of the second marriage with the artist Diego Rivera.”

Sara Riches born 1980-85 from Denmark W/A Australia is an artist that explores the depths of human emotion and feminine strength “Inspired by her past and present feelings, Riches' art is a dynamic expression of growth and change, reflecting the ever-evolving nature of life itself.” The artwork of hers that I chose to add to my exhibition is

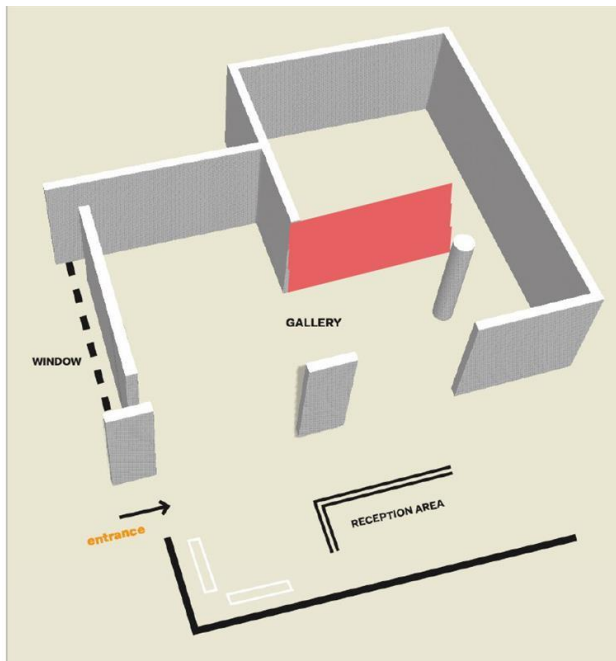


Painting the roses painting.

Acrylic on wood. 44.9 x 65cm.

This painting from what I have found was made to be a play on Alice in wonderland and has used eye catching colours to create a vibrant yet delicate painting of a young woman with thorn covered roses in her hair that are dripping with blood.

GALLERY PLAN FOR MY EXHIBITION.



Using this floor plan of my chosen gallery that I can exhibit my chosen artworks in an effective way while allowing them all to be in their own areas. I chose to use a minimal amount of work as I believe that the artworks as well as their stories are able to speak for themselves. As you enter and turn left 'the wounded deer' Frida Kahlo, will be right ahead of you, when following the walls around the rest of the gallery space you will see 'The starry night' Vincent van Gogh, then 'Yard with lunatic's' Francisco de Goya finally followed by 'Painting the roses painting'

Sara Riches. Each artwork will have a soft warm light facing towards them to highlight them in their respective areas creating a nice warm contrast between the artworks and the lighting as well as the bright white walls where they will be displayed.

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