

Self Portrait

Mia Lanzilli

My artwork is called *Self Portrait* and I created it using a wide variety of mediums such as gouache, tempera, ink, acrylic paint, conte, and chalk on a large wooden board. My theme was rejecting traditional ideas in art and challenging the notion of perfection. I drew inspiration from artists whose work might be perceived as unconventional, particularly Egon Schiele's figure paintings. I chose to work on a large scale to showcase the techniques I employed and the skills I acquired in the process.

My initial intention was to explore how artists defy traditional norms in their work, particularly in distorting figures. I aimed to understand their techniques and apply them to my artwork. I accomplished this by studying artists like Schiele, and observing how they used lines and distortion in their unique styles.

I was heavily influenced by Egon Schiele, an Austrian Expressionist painter known for his distorted figurative artworks set against cream-coloured backgrounds. Schiele's work challenged societal views of beauty, preferring to capture the authentic and often unconventional aspects of his subjects by emphasizing contour and expressive lines. I drew inspiration from Schiele's use of lines, incorporating similar techniques like modulated as well as irregular and expressive lines in my figurative painting to convey imperfection and rawness. His work also encouraged me to experiment with gouache for the first time, moving beyond acrylic paint. Gouache proved to be a great choice because its water-based nature allowed me to layer the paint, creating uneven colours and textures.

I also found inspiration in the work of Austrian painter Gustav Klimt. While my artwork may not directly reflect his style, I was fascinated by his distinctive approach to capturing figures. He had a unique way of distorting and warping figures, often merging them into a singular shape. Klimt's artworks expertly demonstrated form, and despite their beauty, they challenged traditional ideas by heavily distorting his figures. Even the way he lavishly decorated his works can be viewed as a form of distortion, as he covered everything in intricate patterns, adding to the unconventional charm of his pieces.

One other artist I drew inspiration from was a contemporary figurative painter, Xi Pan, whose style combines elements of Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt. What captivates me about her work is her ability to seamlessly blend beauty and unattractiveness within the same paintings. In her oil paintings, she portrays pale women with elongated body parts and unconventional facial features. Contrary to the distorted figures, I admire how she incorporates vibrant colours and diverse patterns, creating a striking contrast. Xi Pan's approach intrigued me because it showcased a unique perspective on distorting figures, going beyond mere inspiration from Schiele.

In my artwork, I am confident that I successfully conveyed my chosen theme of rejecting traditional ideas. The painted and drawn mixed-media figure I created is intentionally messy, and distorted, and features a vibrant array of colours, adding to the dynamic and unconventional nature of the piece. I employed a diverse range of lines, including modulated lines that vary in weight and directional brushstrokes, showcasing the direction through the line of the brushstroke.