

abstract figurative, y2k, heavy metal music and the alter ego

I'm a young painter currently living in Malaga. Since finishing high school I have developed and grew into the artist I am today. I've always had a hunger for art and to be a part of the art world but my style was all over the place and underdeveloped and at that point I didn't know what I was going to do with my life but I just knew I wanted to make art. I truly found myself little by little the more I painted the more consistency's there was in my artworks. It all just happened without me realizing even if they're different topics And different ideas they were all linked in some way or another whether it was as topic matter or the same colors that keep popping up. I started off as a figurative painter but now I dived deeper into an inbetween of abstract figurative.

figurative art Is the term that has been particularly used since the arrival of abstract art to refer to artists that retain aspects of the real world as their subject matter, though in a general sense, figurative also applies retrospectively to all art before abstract. Figurative shows clear shapes that everyone can recognise as real life things, however even though the elements of the painting are real doesn't mean they have to stick to the same colour palette as which the objects are in real life.

Some figurative painters that really inspire me are; scramble cable who is an American live music painter known for his use of bright colours and his style of expressionist screen prints and paintings of bands musicians and music festivals and concerts. I chose this painter because music and concert culture is something that is very present in my process and in the subject matter of most of my paintings. And painting live at a concert is something I haven't done yet, It's definitely something I would like to do in the future. It's said that His paintings are visualizations of the music he can hear and see at the musical events and I believe that some of my work is doing the same thing but based off my memories and photos of the events as well as listening to the genre of music that was played at these events, trying to recreate the moments as best as I can to be able to translate them into paintings.



And Mark Ryden who is an American painter who blends themes of pop culture with techniques reminiscent of the old masters. mark plays with the rage between cryptic and cute, the viewer is confronted with the juxtaposition of childhood innocence, nostalgia and the mysterious recess of the soul. Mark's work has always resonated with me, I first saw his work on a high school trip to the art museum where his work was being exhibited. I've always had an eye for anything weird, strange and out of the norm. I remembered when I first stepped into the gallery and felt

extremely excited to find his weird creepy cute paintings and sculptures there. I think this was the first time I was really inspired to dive deeper into my artistic journey. His work reassured me that there was a place in the art world for weird and unique paintings, so I placed his work in a special place in my mind. I did do a few pieces that were heavily inspired by his but they were just a few one off paintings that I really enjoyed painting but abandoned the subject to peruse other things but I would still say his work has Subtly inspired my more recent paintings especially the cute aesthetic And the nostalgic pop culture moments in my y2k series but I also think my whole aesthetic as a person would be apart of his world he has created.



Abstract art is art that does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of a visual reality but instead uses shapes, colours, forms and gestural marks to achieve its effect you won't expect to see complete forms of objects seen as the whole movement is not to show such things. even with the lack of realism abstract art can still make sense since it captures the essence of the artists feelings but chooses not to limit itself by external boundaries that could be distracting from the subject that it's trying to get across. some abstract painters that have inspired me are;

Maria Pratts a Spanish abstract painter whose works speak about a decadent world and shows the habits and stereotypes of its surroundings. Her work maintains a sense of hope and optimism though it's bright colours, naive style and the spontaneity of the themes she explores, all of which are supposed to rub salt into the wounds of the problems and contradictions of our world. I think aesthetically I take inspiration from her work like her bright colours and soft pinks and the sketchiness from her images in her paintings.



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Sophie tea I can across through TikTok however she is an up and coming painter from London who's has a gallery in London and Sydney I've always loved her work from afar but recently been inspired by her line work and colour combinations.



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Most people suggest that abstract and figurative are opposite to each other so how could they become and merge together? Knowing that abstract is about expressing feelings without recognisable shapes or figures and that figurative art is doing the same while showing shapes and human form that can link to things in real life, abstract figurative is a mix of elements of abstract and elements of figurative combined on one page some really good examples of that are Daniel Richter who is a German artist who art works tread a path between figuration and abstraction by the chaotic entanglements of fragmented figures against simplified chromatic backgrounds. "I find artworks interesting when they seek to convey something to the viewer that is not entirely translatable through language, or even reason. When art fulfills its promise, it expands something within us, and offers some kind of truth - whatever construction that may be" I chose to mention Daniel Richter as I discovered his work by exploring some art books that I found in my joined studio and I was instantly hooked by his use of colours and techniques I never really been interested in the the human figure but the way they're melted together I'm some of his pieces to create more of an abstract affect really resonated with me and inspired me to experiment with some abstract paintings in a similar way but without the figures but trying to treat the paint like he does by mixing a lot of different colours and textures

Michel Majerus is another abstract figurative painter would sample from art history and pop culture and translated them into large scale paintings using graphics from song lyrics brand logos and cartoons. and he would merge them together with abstract elements.



As a painter who started off painting things from photos and references and then used those references and distorted them into surreal paintings like in here:



I wanted to transition into more abstract paintings but still keep an element of realism, as it is something I really loved and enjoyed as a painter as I was so used to painting with tiny brushes and blending fine details, I felt like I was missing that aspect in painting solely abstract or at least in the way I was painting them at the time. I also needed something that I could recognise in my paintings and relate to in everyday life rather than just admiring colors on a page. However, as well as mixing the two in one painting I also transition between the abstract and figurative but when I paint things in a figurative manner I try to keep it much looser and not get lost in the details and keep it in a more sketchy way.

Something else I have been thinking about a lot recently when having to dive deep into my paintings is the act of covering and what it means to and for my work and what it means on a wider metaphorical scale. The act of covering I've come to realize is really important to my process and to the final outcome of my paintings and it's definitely present in most if not all of my works. It not only gives dimensions to the paintings but on a more personal level allows me to have an intimate relationship with my paintings. I allow the viewer to see only what I allow them to see. I hide parts of the painting only I know about, even if what I was covering was a mistake, a passage I have written or even a full finished painting. How many times do I cover the painting with something else? How many layers does each painting have that you can't see? I came to realize we do this as people, I think we all have many layers but who or what does it take to peel or expose those layers of our selves or are we always hiding never fully being our true selves.

What does it mean to cover? To cover or to hide the parts of ourselves we don't want anyone else to see, to feel safe from being judged or disliked. To conceal or to cover up the truth for someone else or for yourself. We cover things to protect from external factors that can hurt, break or tarnish them like how we cover our furniture when we paint the walls or how the Egyptians used to wrap the bodies and place them in gold coffins of the most important people to keep them preserved. Covering our bodies with clothes to not feel or be naked or to give us confidence when we wear what we like. To cover our faces with makeup to change our appearance to feel beautiful or more comfortable in our own skin. We cover our skin with tattoos to feel or look more edgy, artsy or scary.

Covering the canvas with paint and other media to transform it to become something new, something better, something artistic.

Music is a huge part of my process and journey but specifically heavy metal, metal, rock and alternative rock, I grew up listening to it as my sister was a huge metal head in her teenage years until she wasn't and as someone who looked up to my sister I wanted to be just like her so when I became a teenager I started exploring this genre of music. The type of music I'm listening to determines how the paint is applied and how I move with the canvas when painting my backgrounds. Working on the floor really allows me to move with the music using my hands and fingers to the rhythm to create texture and blend colours together. Using my hands and fingers allows me to be one with the music better than when using brushes. I usually go on with a brush to get some details for textures I wouldn't be able to achieve with my hands.

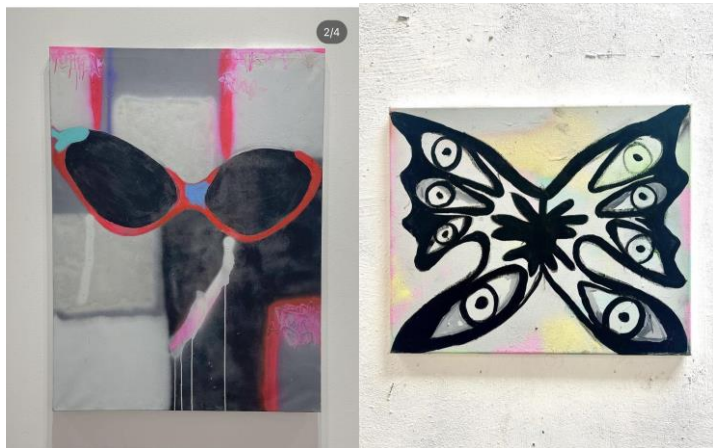
I think music is something really personal for everyone individually, music can make us feel certain things that nothing else can make us feel like. It can bring back memories from good times and bad, and sometimes when we listen to a certain song those memories can come rushing back with a strong sense almost like your back in that place where you first heard that song. I use that to my advantage when I listen to songs and musicians that I saw in concert and take those memories, the sights, the smells, what I can hear and touch when I'm there and translate them into my paintings. Another thing that really helped visually with choosing the colour pallet was a movie that really matched my aesthetic and the metal and rock culture and just really really loved was metal lords. I was instantly excited when I first saw this movie at the time I really needed that extra boost of inspiration and energy that I could bring into my paintings so I screen shot parts of the movie that I felt like I wanted or could use for my paintings and printed them off and stuck them all in my studio and used that to fuel my paintbrushes and went from there.

Jack Coulter is a painter who I was looking into recently as he can see sounds. He uses his synesthesia experiences to inform his abstract expressionist paintings. I didn't particularly feel drawn to his work however I did feel drawn to his technique and his ability to see the music and use that to make paintings.



Concert/gig culture is something else I wanted to include in my work and process when taking a deeper look into the what, why, where and how's of metal music culture. When you go to a concert or to a gig in a club your instantly inspired not only from the music of your favorite band or a new band your getting introduced to but also from the atmosphere, band posters on the wall to the crazy outfits and makeup styles, the leather, the boots, the mosh pits, alcohol and drugs. I was using this subject matter to introduce myself to Mixing abstract and figurative but I am thinking more in terms of gigs rather than concerts and looking more into club culture . Gigs

are small musical events that are usually held in bars, small venues or clubs. As the venues are smaller it's more messy, more sweaty, more louder, everything is times two except the size of the venue. Think about club culture but with metal music. It's much cheaper than a concert, more local or up and coming bands rather than extremely famous ones. It's more of a community. When you go to gigs frequently in the same venue you find the same people more than once and it feels like a tight knit community. This is what inspired me to create my first abstract figurative paintings. I took things that are involved, what I frequently saw or thought belong in this culture or atmosphere as well as listening to the music and keeping everything else in mind that I mentioned earlier.



Something that is quite new to my work is the Y2K and the early 2000s aesthetic. It really caught my eye and I wanted to merge or make it a part of my work. This y2k aesthetic has really come into trend at the moment so I felt like it was a relevant topic to explore. Something specific from this era that has become quite popular is the y2k tattoos designs, I instantly knew I recognised these designs from the metal community, from Poster designs, clothing, makeup and even tattoos themselves so I knew this was something I needed to include in my paintings. More than that I feel like the year 2000 was something quite important to me as it's the year that I was born into this world so I wanted to dive deeper by exploring music from that time, toys, fashion, pop culture and things I had that was passed down from my older sister and childhood memories that I could remember, luckily I have a really good long term memory. The year 2000 shifted us into a digital future with the rise of the internet so I decided to start to paint memorabilia from that time starting with the hello kitty cd player painting but keeping it sketchy like I mentioned before and not get lost in the details. It reminded me of sitting on the kitchen counter with my sister listening to music and singing along. I must've only been 2 or 3 at that time of this memory but it's something I've never forgotten and from there continued painting g these memorabilia's wether it was a personal memory or just objects that reflect that era.



I thought about Creating a character that paints these paintings but the more i dove into this idea it wasn't so much a character but my alter ego, that same person who would be at the concerts and gigs dressed in crazy colors mixed with grungy chains, studs, fishnets and wild makeup is the same person who paints my paintings they are me and I am them. I have social anxiety and find it really hard to talk in front of groups of people or be apart of groups in general so when I had to present my work or having to be in a group setting I found myself dressing up and putting makeup to allow myself to feel more confident and become someone who is more comfortable doing these things. I think this something that has progressively been happening and has become more noticeable as time has passed it started with a simple amount of makeup and my favorite T-shirt to more extreme makeup and teddy Balaclavas bight pink trousers mixed with band T-shirts I wanted to become the aesthetics that my paintings portray, but also to show that not all metalheads and metal culture is just black as I think this is something that people who are not apart of the metal community think. Moreover this also coincides with the act of covering. I'm covering my identity to allow myself to feel more relaxed when interacting with people. I am a victim of covering like (in my opinion) so is the rest of us.

Moving forward I'm going to continue with all of these things I have talked about in my paintings, I don't have any plans to change course however the more I research the more I discover new things so I could end up doing this for a really long time or something else could immediately grab my attention however I still think music, covering, cute/grungy will always be apart of my work no matter what subject matter I decide to investigate.

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<https://jrp-editions.com/art/books/monographs-artists-books/if-we-are-dead-so-it-is/>

Yoelbenharrouche.co

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Poets.org

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Coulter

<https://sophieteaart.com/en-es/pages/about-sophie>