

I was recently made aware that the constant cycle of worry and panic that I appeared to be caught in was diagnosed as general anxiety disorder, an illness with which my mother suffers from as well. This work is part of a series of portraits depicting my mother in exaggerated emotive stages, displaying various states of awareness and recognition in each. I wanted to create this work as a way to further analyze a relationship that I often mistakenly view as familiar, to perhaps recognize the changing structure of a relationship when the individuals within it change as well. For this portrait, I felt that the commonality of our situations, both sitter and artist, provided a unique opportunity for reflection. The portrait explores the relationship between mother and son, but also of artist and subject, where both individuals happen to exist within similar spaces, created under similar afflictions or constraints.

The most impactful works that have inspired me personally are portraits that detail the life of someone accurately. In creating this portrait, I wanted to challenge the misrepresentation that has often plagued minority or cultural groups. My mother is Métis, and I have inherited this ancestry from her as well. The addition of a buffalo pelt, which is both real and originated from within Canada, is a very purposeful inclusion and exists as a symbolic reference to the garment's historical importance as well as referencing other, more personal histories. The production of fur and its many valid criticisms in contemporary society can often overshadow the integral role it has played in the past, as understating its historical importance in the formation of a country and the relations of its inhabitants. This portrait provides an intimate glance into the memories that are at risk of being forgotten. By re-purposing the aesthetic and role of the fur in a contemporary context, I have hopefully presented an opportunity for its legacy to be rediscovered in a manner that is sharply contemporary.

As a Canadian artist, I do believe that works of art should not only exist to archive the lives of its inhabitants, but should also act as a visual catalogue of its country's history, and in this case, the stories that are historically important to its successes and failures. There is nothing more representative of a nation than a portrait of its inhabitants. This is, in its simplest terms, a work depicting just that.

There are certain works that give an artist the confidence to move forward in their practice. A work that you can be proud of presenting, that you can confidently say represents everything you hope to say as a creative individual. For me, this is one of those works.