

My body of work revolves around the theme of depression and anxiety, but is expressed through several different ideas. I want people to look at my works and to understand how depression and anxiety are real mental health issues that make some people feel like they are drowning in emotion. But what I want most as a result of my work is for the people who think I play the victim or have judged me or made fun of me in any way to look at my art and take in the hurt that I feel on a daily basis; I want them to know they are wrong and for them to start respecting people with mental illnesses. My work is a visual representation of different aspects of depression and anxiety in a person's life including what their lowest lows might look like, or what it looks like when someone with mental illness is actually happy, or what they are like on the inside through my perspective. So while some of my pieces may not only be about the sadness I drown in, they are still a visual of the life of someone struggling with mental illness.

Four of my pieces convey depression and anxiety in a way that shows viewers what these mental illnesses look like for a person. In other words, it is a representation of my lowest lows as someone who struggles with their mental health. These four pieces include "Emptiness," "Pain," "Act One: Fear," as well as "Toxic Positivity: A Look Underneath The Mask." All four of these pieces are inspired by different artists including Tsoku Maela, Roy Lichtenstein, Ron Dias, and Pablo Picasso, but all four of them contribute to what depression looks like in my eyes and life. In a way, these pieces depict how I feel when I am weak and make me look vulnerable. A tear can be seen in three of them, but all three pieces rely on facial expressions to display the fear, sadness, and emptiness that is depression and anxiety.

Contrarily, four of my pieces are a representation of when I am feeling my best or even just relaxed. However, while these are positive emotions, they're still aspects of depression and anxiety to me because they show what I feel like when I am calm as a person struggling with mental health. My pieces "Act Two: Revenge," "Ms. Independent," "Airport Park Gazebo Model," and "Marisa's Gaze" are inspired by Paul Dini, John Singleton Copley, Antonio da Ponte, and Henri Matisse. The first two pieces depict what I imagine it would look like for me to overcome my depression and anxiety. The third piece is a different medium, but I felt this one was important to include because the site where I would have the gazebo installed was where I go quite often to calm down and escape my emotions. The fourth piece isn't really me overcoming these negative emotions, but is a visual example of what it is like for me to be calm and feel comfortable; the silly expression seen in the piece isn't a face I would make in public for fear of being judged, but one I would make in an environment that I feel safe in. But as a body, these pieces illustrate the safe or "positive" aspects of battling mental illness.

My pieces "Alter Ego Self Portrait" and "Head of Sariah" are the most demeaning aspects of dealing with depression and anxiety. The two pieces are inspired by Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin as well as Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio and illustrate the negativity and judgment people view me with. I used head pieces such as devil horns and snake hair which each symbolize negative things. The devil horns represent people seeing me as an evil and cruel person, while the snake hair shows that I am judged for something out of my control-mental illness-the same way people judged Medusa. One of the reasons I feel so bad about myself and have anxiety around people is because of the fear of being judged and the knowledge that they hate me for something they don't know anything about, as depicted in these pieces.