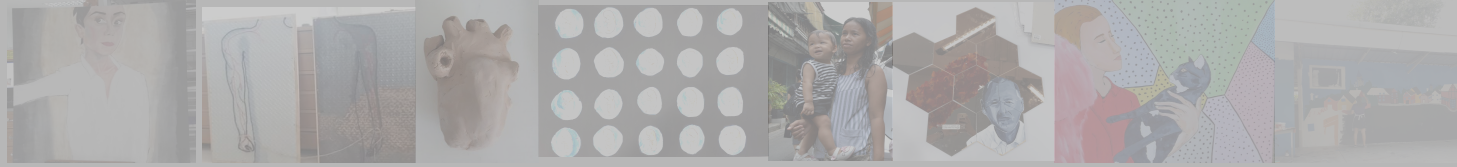




# *Creative Portfolio*

Anouk Hufschmid Hirschbuehl

# Introduction



For the Visual Arts course in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, we have to choose a theme to be our main focus throughout the two year process. My theme is *Adoption*, which I have approached through my own personal experience. It is a topic that is not often represented in art and I thought this would be a challenge in terms of finding ways of portraying different aspects of it. Most of the pieces in my portfolio are those I have worked on for the past few months (September-December 2017),

In addition, I have incorporated some pieces I am working on for two school theatre productions.

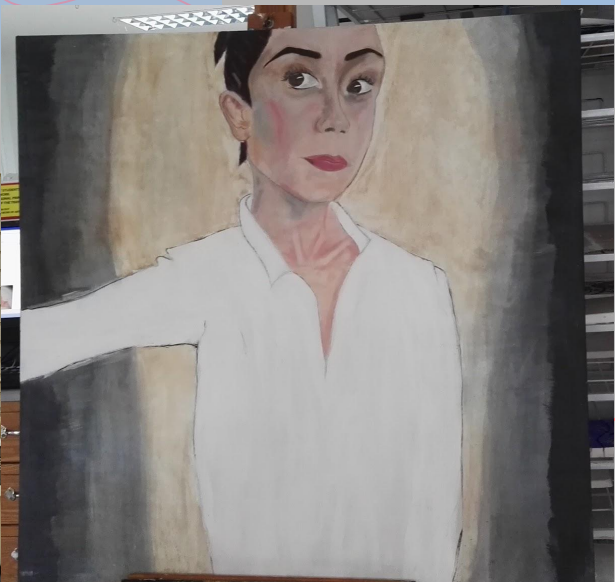
- I worked on the set design for *Beauty and the Beast*, for a charity organisation my school is involved with. Alongside volunteer teachers of a school for disabled children I helped create the set for a performance in December 2017.
- I am Creative Director for *Grease*, this year's drama production at my school, which will be performed in May 2018. I am in charge of both costume and set design, and we are just getting started.

# Self-Portrait

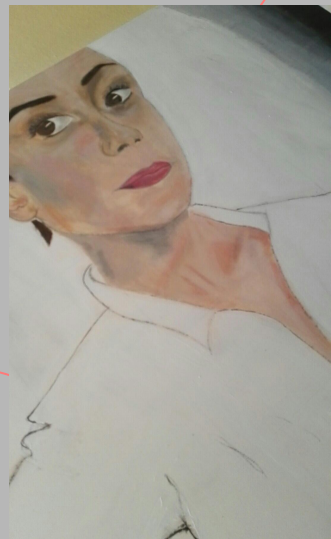
Before starting on our chosen theme, the first piece we had to create for the IB at the start of last school year was a self-portrait. The purpose of this was to discover ourselves and our art style. We did a lot of research on artists, history, and styles. At the end of that process I came back to Egon Schiele, whose painting style has inspired me since I was young.

It was my very first time painting a portrait on a canvas of 100 cm by 100 cm. It was a challenge, and it took me some time to be happy with it. Now after a year passing, I can tell where I could improve and what else I could do with it. I will be going back to this piece before the final exhibition to improve the details that make me unhappy with it.

For practice, we made our own canvas for this. We cut the wood and canvas, and then we primed it. This was to give us experience for the future. I really enjoyed making it, as it reminded me of my younger high school days where we made things out of wood, etc. for school projects. This made me look forward to going to university and studying Theatre Design.



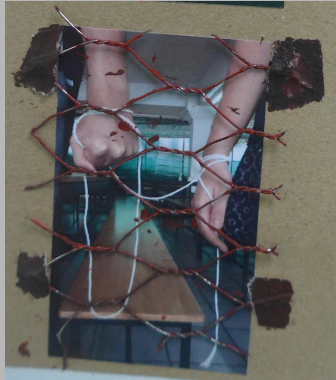
I painted this with acrylic and gesso paint. The background was made using tea stains, which is intended to create the background that Egon Schiele often used.



# "Connection between two people"

My first piece on the theme of "Adoption" is about the most basic part of adoption that I could think of – the biological aspect. For this investigation I decided to concentrate on arms and veins, which then became the basis of my idea. The reason I chose arms was because this was the first connection I ever made with my biological father, whom I never saw growing up. And since we are biologically related I wanted the veins on the piece to represent this.

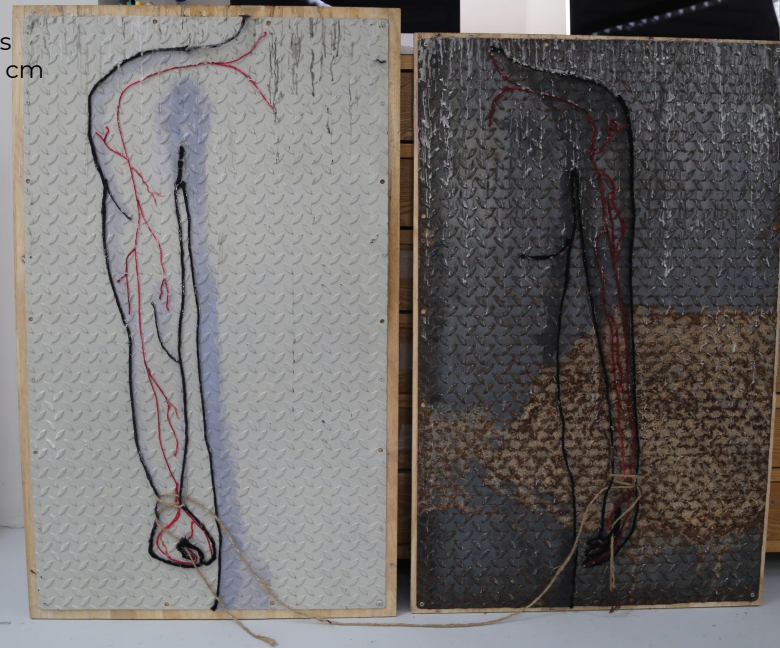
It is one piece made on two separate canvases made of wood and a diamond plate metal sheet on top. I wanted to create an industrial look, inspired by Louise Bourgeois. The background of the female, thin arm (which represents me) is rusty and dirty due to the experiences and feelings I have had in general and also towards this situation. The other canvas has a clean sheet of metal, representing that his life is all put together. The arms are made of black and red strings. It took a lot of patience to stick them onto the boards. As a finishing touch, I dripped some candle wax from the top. I really enjoyed working with metal and starting this puzzle.



Pages from my sketchbook



The dimensions of this piece are 100 cm x 80 cm





# “Abortion”

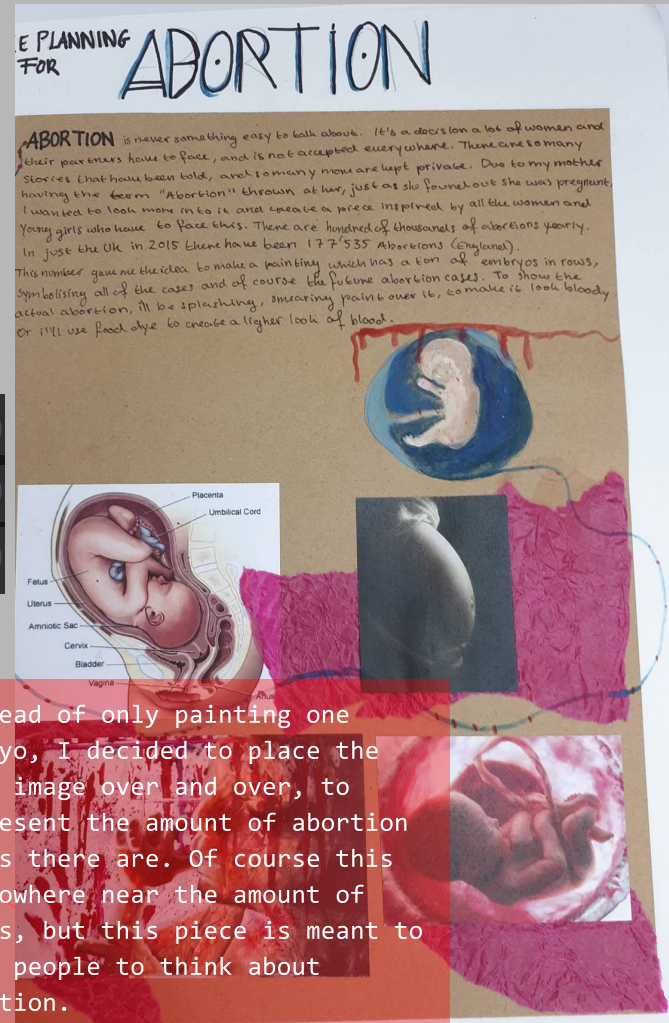
This piece is intended to symbolise the amount of abortion cases there are each year and how seriously this issue should be seen by the public. Society makes abortion a very difficult decision and thousands of women of varying ages are forced to deal with this within a matter of days or weeks. As this is a very emotive issue within society, it makes it even harder for the women facing this.



## Base of the idea:



Since I do not have any photos of an embryo, I found an image online which I then multiplied.



Instead of only painting one embryo, I decided to place the same image over and over, to represent the amount of abortion cases there are. Of course this is nowhere near the amount of cases, but this piece is meant to spur people to think about abortion.

# “Mother and Child relationship”

I wanted to look into a mother and child relationship, since this is a very important aspect of any family. In films if there is a stepmother, she is usually portrayed as “wicked”. This can be a similar issue in adoption cases, where the adopted child is shown less affection than the biological child.

Final Idea:

After trying out several things and thinking more about this piece, I decided to use the same photo over and over in a row with its colouring manipulated (below left), each representing a different emotion which is up to the viewer to interpret.



This is the original photograph I took on a trip to Chinatown in Bangkok. Out of all the photos of the place and of various people this is the one I liked best. There is a lot of emotion in each face with this one photo. Emotion was the main trigger for the idea.

I also did a line drawing in photoshop (right). The point of this piece is to show the love and affection a family has for each other, which is shown through the red line going into each chest and onto the next one. To match my theme, I gave the older child a different “skin” colour to symbolise that she is the adopted child but that the mother’s love and need to protect is the same as for her biological child.





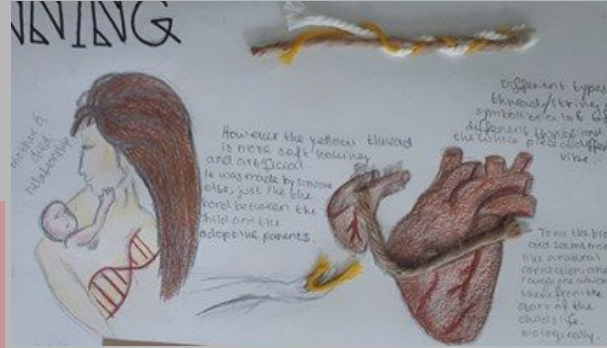
# "Process of Adoption"

For this piece, I decided to work a bit more with clay and create a sculpture. At the beginning of the year we tried out clay making, where we produced plates and printed something onto them. I liked working with clay and wanted to continue to experiment with it.

My idea was to make two hearts out of clay, one larger than the other. The smaller heart would be the child's heart and the larger one belongs to its biological mother. Hearts are the symbol of love, however this is not the classical shape of a heart, but the biological human one.

I wanted the viewer to be able to interact with this piece instead of just looking at it. To accompany this piece, there will be a video playing on a white background, following the adoptee's heart (me) around in a normal week. The video will also allow the viewer a glance into how this person is coping with the struggle, and knowing that they have to carry these thoughts around with them everywhere they go. It is a detached heart, due to it only being half discovered. Its weight symbolises the weight this situation puts on the adoptee.

Excerpt from my sketchbook



Child's heart

This piece was inspired by Kate Dowell. I used clay and decided to make two hearts. She created a heart but gave it a different meaning. Her piece "Ants ate all my sugar" was the main inspiration for the object I decided to make.



Mother's heart

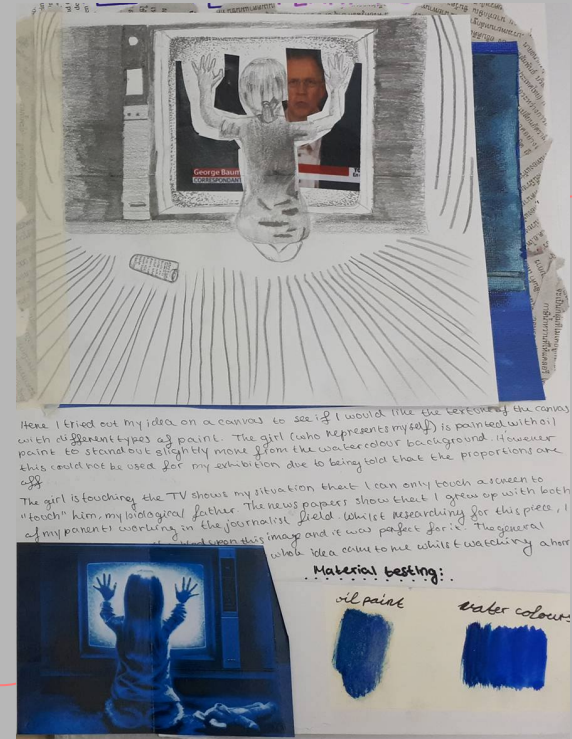
# "Can be seen, but unreachable"



I was inspired by the 2015 version of the film *Poltergeist*. After some research, I stumbled upon a scene from the original movie filmed in 1982. This picture was ideal for the message I wanted to send through this art piece. Instead of having a teddy bear next to her I placed a piece of newspaper, which represents my parents' work. Both of them are journalists, meaning that this is what surrounds me since my childhood.

I want this piece to make a bit of a bigger impact on the viewer, once they understand what it portrays. The person will have to come up close to the painting to see what it is, instead of seeing it from a distance. I painted it on canvas with oil, and the proportions turned out slightly off. I then did it again and took a photo of a friend in the same position as the girl in the scene from *Poltergeist* (bottom right). This helped me out with the proportions and it turned out better. I did this as a pencil study. Using that as a guide, I will be redoing it, again using oil paint.

My biological father is a news reporter for a Swiss news channel, making it easy to see him online and hear his voice. My parents never hid this from me. This piece should represent the chance I have that I can see this person but I can never reach him physically.





# "Reflection"

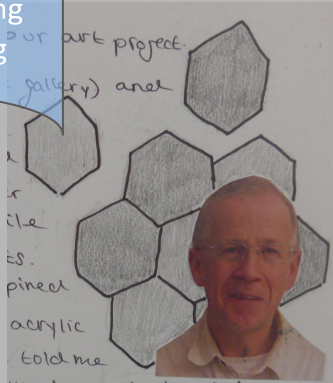
This is a portrait of my biological father painted on a mirror with acrylic paint. It is inspired by an independent artist I saw in the Saatchi Gallery\*, and by René Magritte.



Through all of my pieces I want to create something new and different. This should make the viewer slightly uncomfortable due to a face staring back at them when they are looking into the mirror.

\*I wrote down her name on my phone, but the note was not saved properly. I looked for her on their website but was unsuccessful.

Painting on a mirror was challenging; there were many things I learnt during the process and found frustrating whenever the paint scratched off. However, after a couple of hours' work, I am very proud of the result.



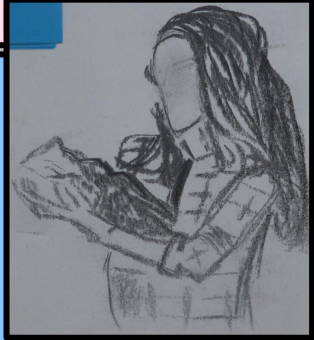
Every time someone passes they will see something different.

This is something very personal to me. Family friends who know my biological father said I have similar features. I decided to see it for myself and to paint him on a mirror. Instead of seeing just myself in the mirror, I can see and compare myself with my biological father.

# "Rejection"

Rejection is usually portrayed as something negative. Most people have experienced rejection of some sort. For this piece, I wanted to play around with the idea of rejection.

Instead of painting someone looking sad and alone due to a rejection, I painted in a pop art way. I was inspired by Yayoi Kusama for the background, and for the rest, Roy Lichtenstein. As a subject I decided to focus on my cat and how he sometimes reacts when I pick him up. If he does not want affection, he strains to get away. I painted this with acrylic on a canvas which stretches 100 cm by 80 cm. The colours should confuse the viewer, since it is not something one thinks of when being rejected. This is more a fun and light-hearted piece.



I first thought it could be a nice idea to do it with charcoal, but changed my mind.

I took photos of my cat and myself and selected one to paint.



# "Gilded Cage"

This is one of my newer pieces. Instead of another painting I decided to make an installation. I was inspired by a ballet set design by Rolf Sachs for the "Les Ballets de Monte Carlo" in 2007, as well as by the story of "The Erl-King" by Angela Carter. In both there is bird cage. Instead of placing a bird or a human in it, I decided to use it as a representation of something else. Not only a cage can trap someone. There are so many things which people claim that "traps" them. A book, for example. People might say a book trapped them, that they could not put it down until it was finished. But not only the book traps the reader. The author traps the characters in a few pages. Every time someone reads the book, the characters created by the author relive the same situation over and over. I found both of these aspects very interesting. The book makes the reader think from a different perspective and instead of thinking that only a cage can trap someone, other objects can too.

kindness

disgust

blessed

exposed

disappointed

trapped

delightful

pointless

peaceful

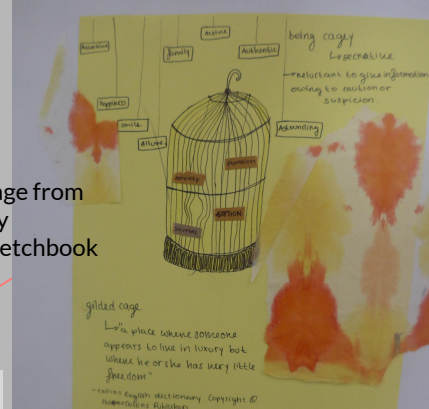
ineffable

I spray painted the cage gold, and hung negative words on the inside. People tend to keep negative feelings inside, and portray a different, positive image on the outside. This is meant to embody the phrase "living in a gilded cage". Even if someone might seem to be living in luxury, everyone has their negative aspects in life. I wanted to represent this in the installation. Some parts of the cage are pulled open representing that the negative feelings I had towards this theme finally broke free and now I am able to speak about it with a more positive mindset.



This is what the piece will look like. When the time comes for the exhibition, the frame that I am holding will hang on its own.

Page from my sketchbook



Some of the words that hang in/around the cage



# Set design for *Beauty and the Beast*

I was asked to be part of the set design team of *Beauty and the Beast* for a charity my school works with. This was a collaborative piece with the school which helps and teaches children with mental and physical disabilities. I worked with a team of teachers and students from the school on painting the set for their December 2017 production.



After school I went to the set and worked on painting the village. We intended to construct a castle which was to be portable and brought in during the scene change. The aim for this is to make it as easy as possible for the children. Unfortunately, time constraints meant that we were unable to make the set as ambitious as we wanted. However, I was very excited to be part of this and having the opportunity to help out.

The photos are of the set and me working on it. The stage is a partly-covered extension of the building and because this is Bangkok, the performance can take place outdoors in December.





# Set and costume design for *Grease*

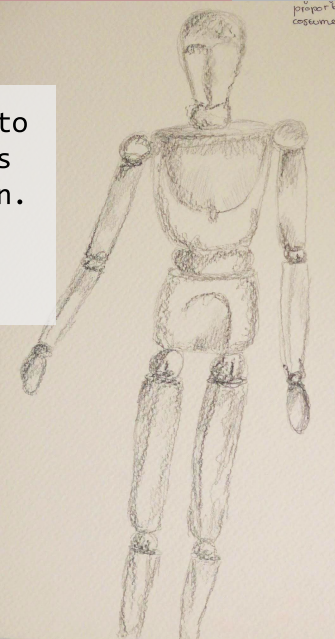
This year I am Creative Director for the school production *Grease*, which will take place in May 2018. At the time of writing (December 2017) we have only just got started. So far, I have arranged weekly meetings with the production team in which to collect ideas and notes about scenography for this play. We produce sketches of our ideas, collect research on artists as inspiration, and I gave certain people a scene to focus on, etc. In order to keep everything organised I created a Google Team Drive into which I placed separate folders for each character and scene. Having the Drive makes it easier for everyone and allows people to share their ideas and submit sketches.



In order to help out the Y12 students working with me, I gave them sketchbooks so they can treat it like a portfolio. It will make it easier for them to organise their work, and give them a good start for university applications to art courses.

In preparation for doing sketches for the set design, I met up with an architect who showed me how to properly draw a room. It is important to get the feeling of space into the drawing, which I feel like I have started to accomplish here.

This was an exercise to learn body proportions for the costume design. I look forward to practising this further.



# Shoes by Van Gogh

As a homework task we were asked to do an artist study. I have always been fascinated by Van Gogh's painting style and wanted to give that a try. Instead of painting "Starry Night" I chose one of his shoe paintings.



Original painting by Van Gogh



"A Pair of Leather Clogs" is one of my favourite paintings by Van Gogh. In my version I used acrylic paint instead of oil.

Another reason why I wanted to paint these was because of my passion for costumes. I remembered that during my internship at the theatre and opera house in Bern, I was given a tour of their costume and shoe department. When sitting in the audience, the shoes do not seem so important, but seeing them up close showed me their significance. There were many different shoes; all kinds of high heels, different colours, sizes (realistic and unrealistic ones), and so much more.

# Postscript

Thank you for taking the time to look at my portfolio. I have tried to give an idea of who I am and what my interests are.

I am very passionate about the theme of Theatre Design and creating my artworks in accordance to this. In order to make these slides are realistic as possible, I designed them the way I create my sketchbook pages. This should also give you a look into who I am as a student and the way I work best.

As part of the Visual Arts course, we had to do a Comparative Study, this involved designing slides whilst comparing different artists and pieces. Doing that was a good preparation for creating this portfolio.

All of these artworks are part of my International Baccalaureate Diploma programme. Most of them are part of the Visual Arts course (the theme of “Adoption”) and others for Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS). I am currently working on three additional pieces to complete the Adoption topic within the next few months, and Grease is also just beginning.

The thread running through the portfolio is to connect the pieces like veins in a human body, in line with my theme.

