

Dream Realm: A Look into the Mind

In this surrealist self-portrait, I represent my subconscious and dream realm through imagery that symbolizes inner struggles and aspects of my life. I chose elements from my dreams and personality, and a color palette inspired by Salvador Dali's painting *Persistence of Memory* (1931). All the images were procured from the internet and edited to fit my narrative. Finding images that represented everything from my original vision for this project proved difficult and thus the result is not what I envisioned, however, it turned out better than imagined. Throughout my search I found several images that though not originally representative of my intentions, they reminded me of myself and other aspects I could symbolize in a more abstract way. I pieced everything together in Photoshop with all the knowledge I gained throughout the semester. In retrospect, this artwork is a result of experimentation, similarly to how we all go through a journey in life to find ourselves and our ideas and beliefs keep changing the more time passes.

The usage of a complimentary color palette in this piece creates a sense of unity within the composition. The hues of yellow and oranges in contrast with the blues and light greens create a sense of tranquility amidst the chaos that the piece symbolizes. This translates to real life as most of my struggles are internal and I tend to project calm and confidence on the outside. I also used space successfully to create depth and build a world that almost feels real. Although the overload of objects in this piece help communicate some of its meaning, perhaps removing a few of them—such as the building in the back and the person jumping from it—that do not appear to relate to the piece at first glance, will make the composition easier to follow and comprehend.

I am often described as an overachiever and the entire composition of this piece hints to that; it is busy and has more than what it needs to be good. The stars and constellations represent our connection to the universe. The phrase "I used to think I could control the universe with my obsessive thoughts" displays my belief in the law of attraction; it is both liberating and terrifying as I could unintentionally manifest something bad happening. On the clouds there is a humanoid shape running and a woman holding her head, this represents my head being in the clouds all the time to escape from reality. There are also several eyes watching, and on the ground, there is a man with a telescope looking at the mannequin: me. The eyes and the man watching represent the high value I place on other's opinions of me and how they perceive me. Far in the background there is a sign from my hometown in Cuba that says, in translation, "Cienfuegos is the city that I love the most." It shows where I come from and the distance from the mannequin represents the loss of memory and connection I have to that place as time passes by. The mannequin is enclosed in a bubble because I have lived in a bubble my entire life and I am too scared to pop it. The hands in the floor reaching for the bubble represent the outside forces pressuring me and trying to break me out of my bubble. They are all the good and the bad that I am shielding myself from. Inside the bubble, flying around the mannequin are four butterflies, representing my imagination, spirituality, relationships, and freedom. The mannequin is holding a ball with scribbles that say anxiety and stress and one of the butterflies landed on it; it is now red—corrupted—because the anxiety and stress negatively affects the things they stand for. The brain is in a separate bubble which symbolizes the separation between it and my physical self. In front of the brain that are two mannequins arguing; the fight between reason and emotion. This is a very condensed explanation, and many things were left out in order to fit it all in one paragraph, there are still more easter eggs for the viewer to find and decipher the meaning of.