

DYSTOPIAN
ANXIETY
DREAD



2023 CAPSTONE
WENHE LU

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I would like to dedicate this page to all the people who
have helped me.

To my partner Ruikai, thank you for the help with my
work and the everlasting emotional support.

Thanks to all faculties for helping me in various ways.

Thanks to all my peers encourage my work.

ARTIST STATEMENT



I use the metaphor of a dystopian future to explore the pervasive anxiety and negative effects of modern society. Through the representation of the five senses, my surrealist sculptures challenge common perceptions and provoke emotions in the viewer. Anxiety is a complex and ever-present force that shapes our thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations, and my art seeks to reflect this complexity. By exploring the intersection between anxiety and the dystopian future, I invite viewers to reflect on their own fears and the collective anxieties that define our time. Through my work, I hope to encourage dialogue and promote a deeper understanding of the complexities of contemporary society.

INTRODUCTION

My work is inspired by the anxieties of contemporary society. People in contemporary society experience a sense of uncertainty, fear and unease in times of economic, political and social upheaval. It is becoming increasingly common for society as a whole to exhibit various feelings of anxiety. As a member of the current society, I cannot avoid being trapped by this problem. I explore the ways in which anxiety manifests itself in our lives and the impact it has on our mental health. I use the medium of glass, a fragile and breakable material that represents the instability that many people feel when faced with uncertainty and anxiety. I have created two works that are visual expressions of the human organism through distortion. Use glass to contrast and distort with human bodies to create uncomfortable sculptures. I use organs to express the contemporary sensory response to anxiety.

INSPIRATION

HP LOVECRAFT

HP Lovecraft is a surrealist writer whose novels aim to free readers from the shackles of their imagination. His father was sent to a mental hospital as a child due to hallucinations and rage attacks, and his mother later suffered a nervous breakdown. After his father's death Lovecraft began to have constant nightmares, a problem that plagued him into adulthood while he was reading dark fiction. According to author and Lovecraft commentator Alan Moore "Lovecraft came of age in an American yet to cohere as a society, much less as an emergent global superpower, and still beset by a wide plethora of terrors and anxieties" (Moore 2014, p. 33). Lovecraft is a "anti-millennialism" He does not expect hope for the future, but believes that the future will only bring debilitation.

CONNECTION WITH ME



Fg1: HP LOVECRAFT

I was inspired by the bizarre world Lovecraft created. I used to have nightmares as a child and when I was growing up, I was often attracted to surreal literature, paintings and drawings. I feel the same way about the current society as Lovecraft did back then, not expecting a future full of hope. More than anything else, I believe the future is anxiety-inducing and frightening. And this anxiety-inducing future is based on the development of the present society. These negative aspects of modern society are seen by me as triggers for a dystopian future. So my work is a metaphor for the problems of modern society, such as the pathologies caused by drug abuse and the sense of surveillance caused by information leakage. To warn and think about these problems in a way that is uncomfortable for the audience.

RESEARCH

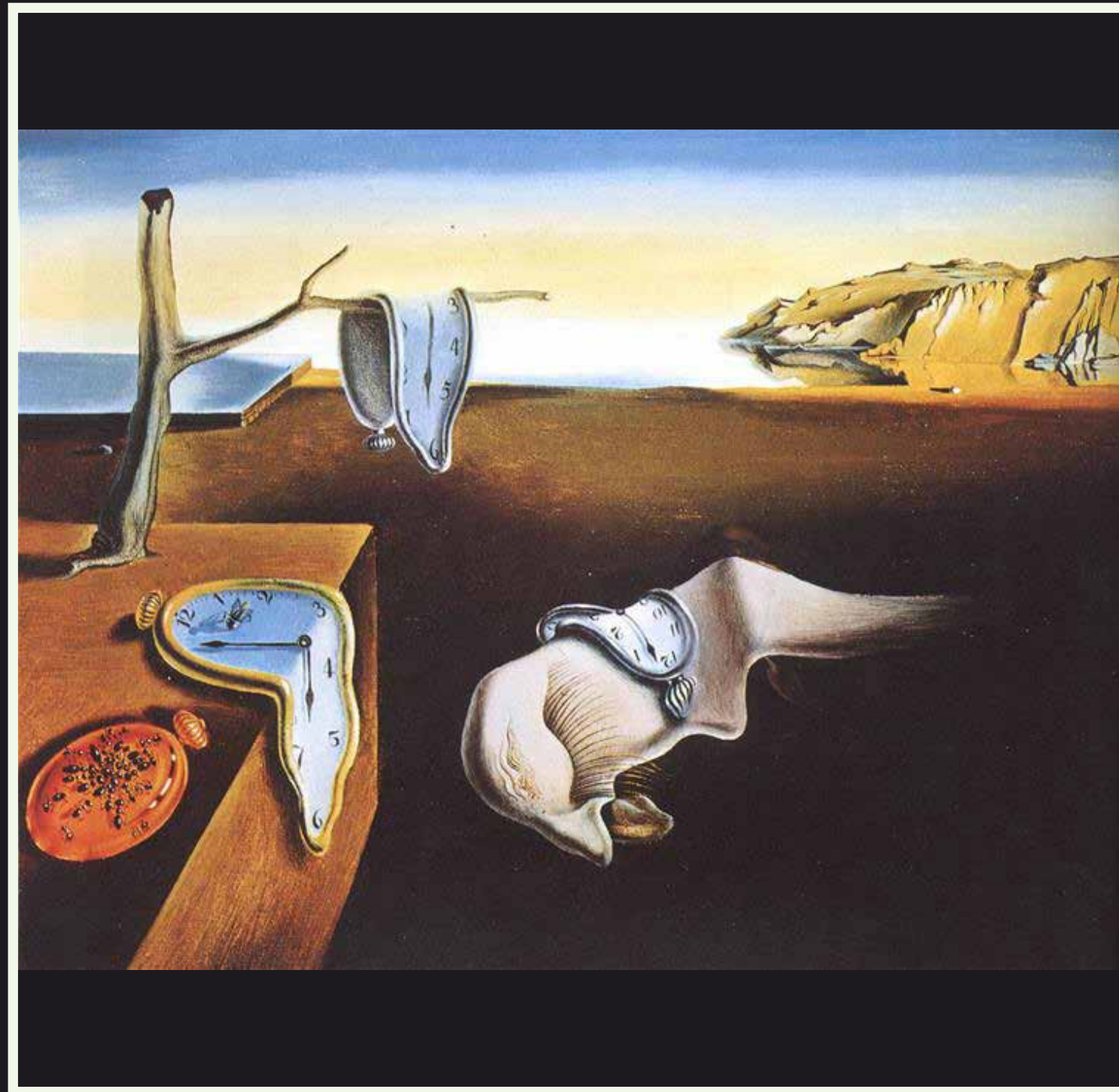
Utopian and Dystopian

Utopia and dystopia are not completely opposed to each other. Utopia is often described as a society that only exists in the ideal, an overly idealized world. Utopia is a place that does not exist, and it is because of the complexity of human society and the beautiful illusions of human beings that utopia is a place that can never exist. The first condition that utopia needs to achieve is world peace, followed by social equality, elimination of social classes, etc. And having these conditions is very demanding, such as only if every living person adheres to the ideology of world peace can there be true universal peace. (Domenech et al, 2021) However, just because a satisfactory utopia can be built does not mean that it will last.

Such as the famous Calhoun's experiments. Although this experiment is used as a study of population growth, it can also reflect the fear of human beings about the future. Calhoun refers to the experiment he built as a mouse utopia, but it becomes a hell in the near future. "Males became aggressive, some moving in groups, attacking females and the young. Mating behaviors were disrupted. Some males became exclusively homosexual. Others became pansexual and hypersexual, attempting to mount any rat they encountered. Mothers neglected their infants, first failing to construct proper nests, and then carelessly abandoning and even attacking their pups. In certain sections of the pens, infant mortality rose as high as 96%, the dead cannibalized by adults." (Ramsden & Adams, 2009) From this experiment, what started out as an affluent utopian society ended up as a dystopian one. I think this dystopian society, which exists in the concept, maps the current social environment.

Surrealism

Surrealism, developed from Dada art around 1922. Surrealism had a profound impact on film, painting and literature. Surrealism occurred between the two world wars, disrupting traditional art forms by unleashing the creativity of the subconscious. Surreal artists often transform dreams or hallucinations into paintings, sculptures or literature. Surreal artists often depicted grotesque scenes, such as Dali. In Dali's work, conventional things are twisted into illogical shapes and objects are arranged in an irregular way. Dali distorts his memory, but he does not make everything out of nothingness.



FG2: The Persistence of Memory, Salvador Dalí, 1931

"In the visual arts, surrealism was a revolt against the purely aesthetic and abstract values of modern art. Instead it stressed the value of instinctive expression (sometimes referred to as "automatism") and seeking to interpret the workings of the subconscious mind." (RM Education, 2020) Surrealist artists focus on the unreal, on everything that exists in the depths of the unconscious, on the world that exists in the imagination. The aim is to break with existing perceptions, laws and traditional rational thought. Surreal works often have supernatural, absurd and fantasy elements. Surrealism differs from other art movements in that it is more subconsciously controlled. So, surrealism evolved from Dada art, but it is different from Dada art.

CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Alessandro Boezio

Boezio is a surrealist sculptor who fuses fingers and limbs and recreates structures. His philosophy of the artificial is linked to his exploration of the grotesque, leading to a reflection on the contradictions of our time and the errors of contemporary civilization. His aesthetic approach appeals to me. In his work "STRANATOMIE", he stitches many fingers together and strings them together to form what looks like an insect, or perhaps a unique life.

I was inspired by his gothic style and his satire on the perverse contradictions of the current times. He uses unnatural deformed forms caused by genetic mutations to give the audience a visual impact.

This led me to my artistic goal, because that is what I wanted to express. Although I use it in a slightly similar way to him, it is not actually different. Boezio expresses in his work a mockery of human vices, while I lean towards expressing human anxiety about the present time and fear of an dystopia future that might lead.



HR GIGER

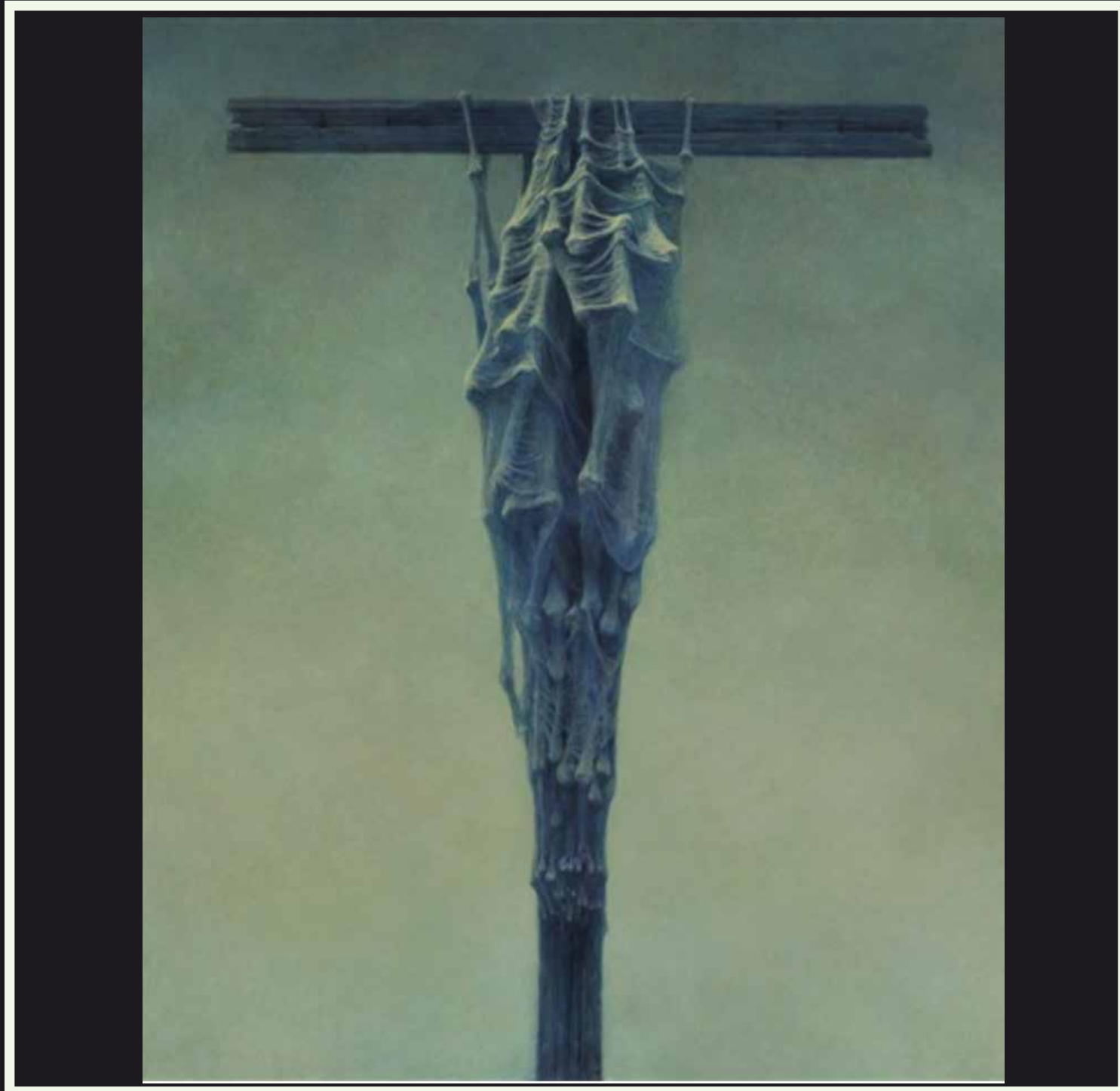


FG4: HR Giger Necronom IV, 1976

Giger is one of my aesthetic sources, and the shaped images he creates give me inspiration for my designs.

HR Giger, the father of "Aliens" Giger's art practice was molded from an early fascination with "skulls and mummies and things like that," as he said in 2009, as well as his own childhood fears. Born in 1940 in Chur, Switzerland, he began sketching and drawing as a boy in order to channel his fright from recurring nightmares and strange dreams. Giger's creations instill fear and despair in the audience; he makes them feel the darkness of a nightmare.

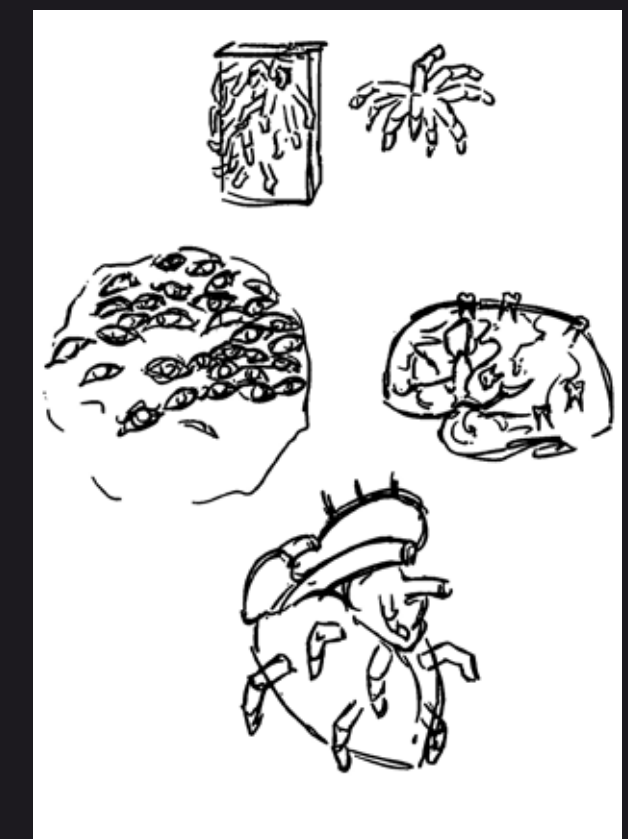
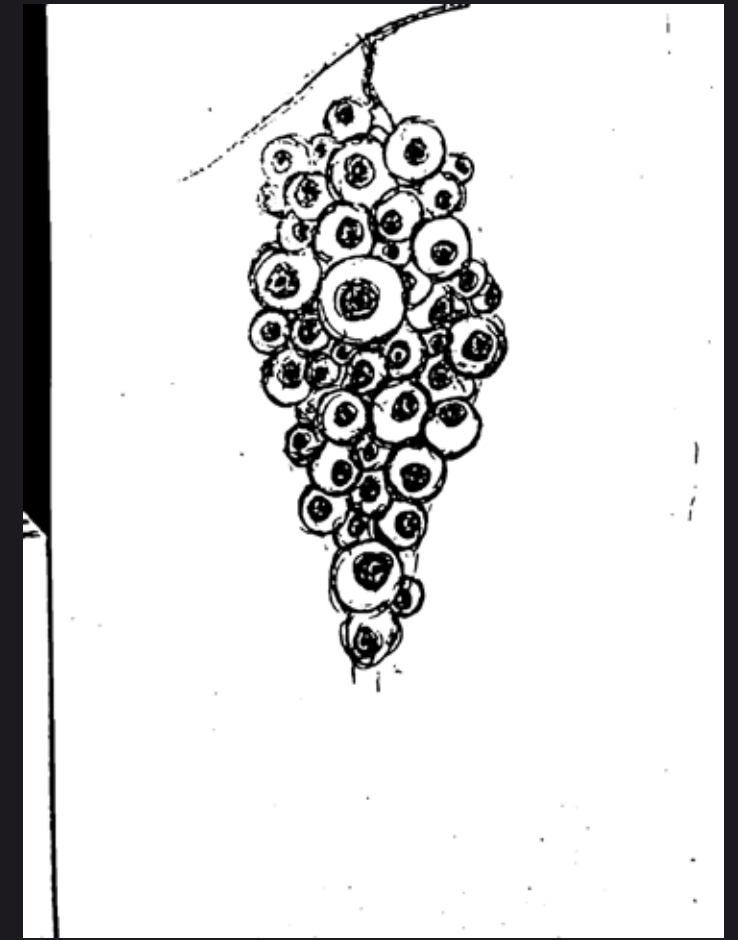
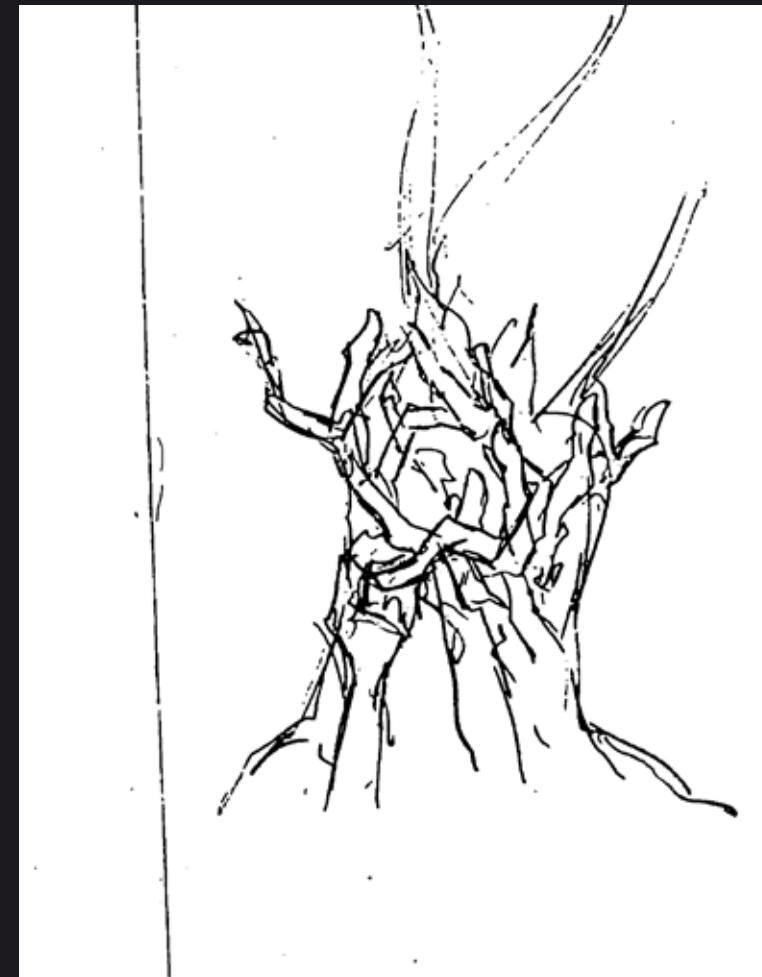
Zdzisław Beksiński

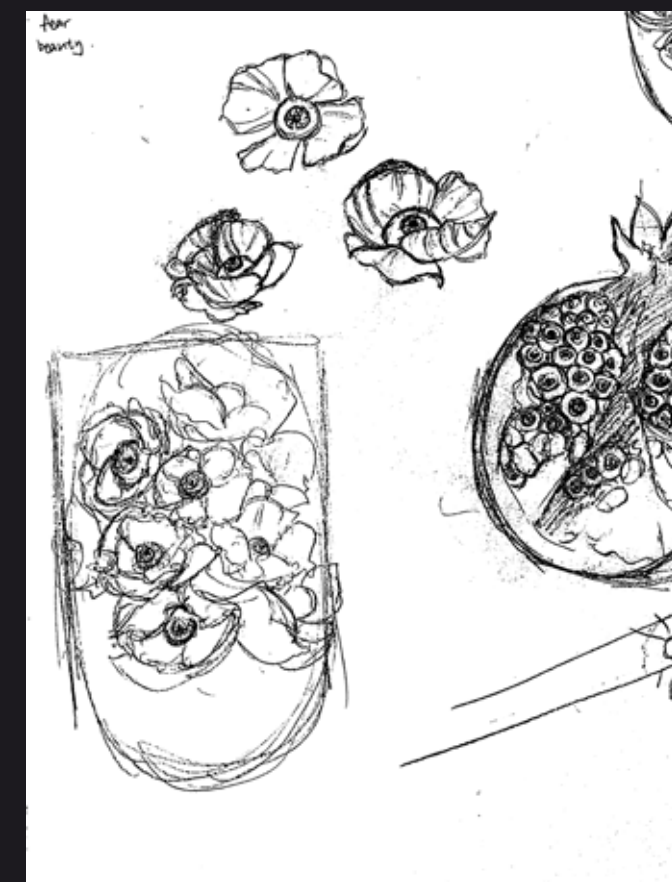
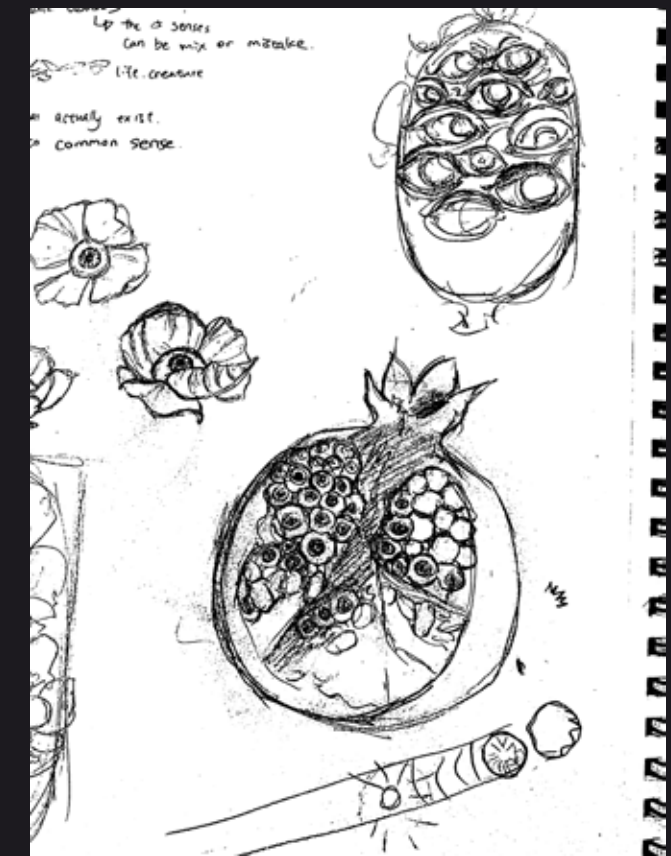
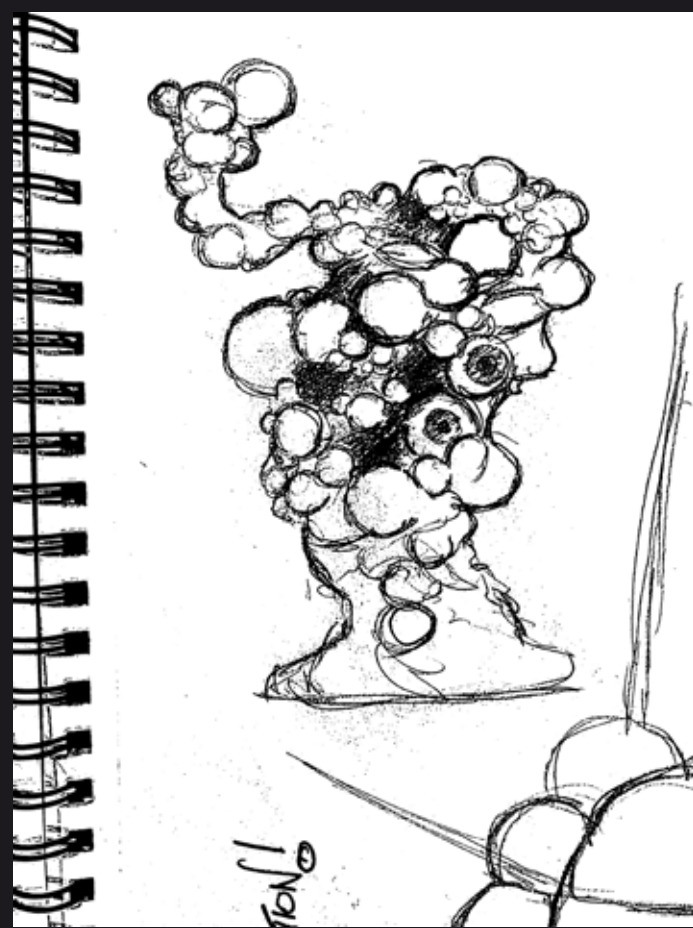
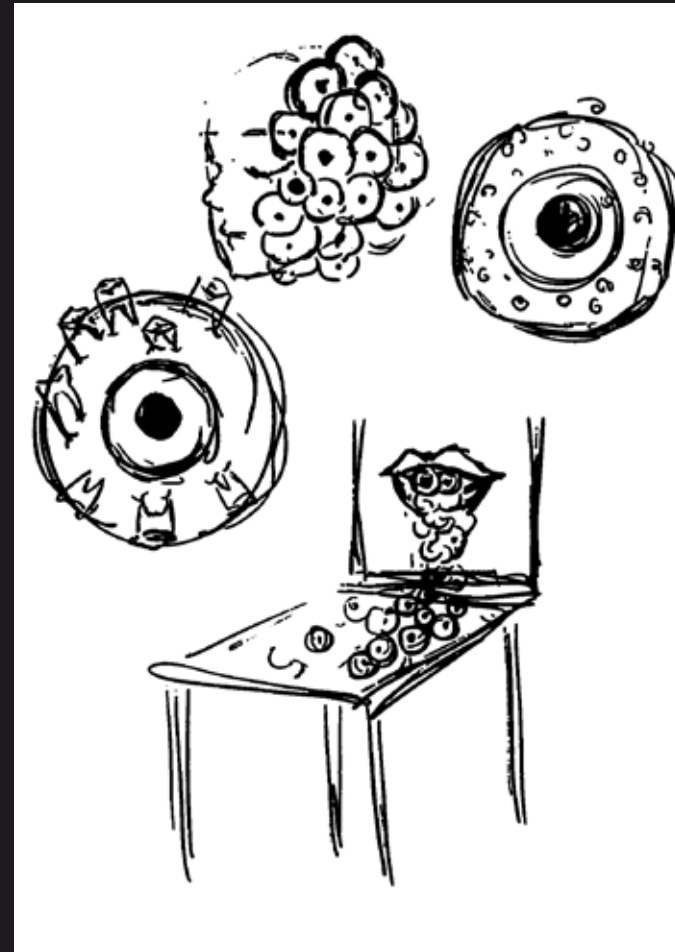


FG5: Zdzisław Beksiński, BEZ TYTUŁU,
1983

Zdzisław Beksiński (24 February 1929 – 21 February 2005) was a renowned Polish painter, photographer, and sculptor. Beksiński executed his paintings and drawings either in what he called a 'Baroque' or a 'Gothic' manner. The first style is dominated by representation, with the best-known examples coming from his fantastic realism period when he painted disturbing images of a surrealistic, nightmarish environment. The second style is more abstract, being dominated by form, and is typified by Beksiński's later paintings. His work is always pervaded by an unsettling atmosphere, and the palette of his paintings suggests a post-apocalyptic scene.

SKETCHES





DESCRIPTIONS

Hands

This work is inspired by the decadence of the current social environment leading to a dystopian future. Real existing limb parts are grafted together to construct a life form that could not exist. In this dystopia fantasy, substance abuse and the indiscriminate use of biotechnology are important factors that lead to the destruction of human society. These limbs, influenced by technology and drugs, begin to take on a life of their own as an irony and a warning to the present substance abuse. The hand, one of the most utilized parts of the human body, underwent proliferation as well as mutiny, and these twisted fingers grew into a monster with a self-life. The relatively normal fingers at both ends are dragged by other stray fingers. One end tries to crawl, while the other end tries to call for help. These tangled fingers are disconcerting. The tragic future of material misuse is suggested by these unnatural, unrealistic distortions.

pomegranate

It evokes the thought that "these little monsters that may appear in the end times come from one's own body". These fingers, of different sizes and from different people, allude to the chaos and lack of control that follows an overdose.

Glass has a strong light transmission, and this pure material provides a clear contrast to the chaotic and distorted structure. Glass has a strong light transmission, and this pure material provides a clear contrast to the chaotic and distorted structure. Another point is that a hard material like glass can be a strong contrast to a soft touch of body part. The transformation of the body into a stiff touch is a manifestation of the fading of life, indirectly expressing the dystopian doom of extinction

this work is an expression of the anxiety and fear caused by surveillance due to information leakage. It emphasizes the possibility of a dystopian future in which everyone is under constant surveillance and loses their freedom as human beings.

This artwork is a striking and unsettling piece, featuring a cut-open pomegranate that has been replaced with dozens of small, seed-like eyeballs. The vibrant red color of the pomegranate contrasts starkly with the eerie, almost realistic quality of the eyeballs. The overall effect is one of discomfort and anxiety, as the viewer is confronted with a surreal and unsettling image that challenges their expectations of what is natural and normal. In many cultures, the pomegranate symbolizes something beautiful, in my culture it often indicates giving birth to many children. Pomegranates are considered sacred in many religions.

And different parts of pomegranate have medicinal value. So, the use of the pomegranate, a fruit that is often associated with health and vitality, only heightens this sense of unease.

In a social context, the artwork speaks to the pervasive anxiety of sight that characterizes modern life. In this digital age, whether it is social media or government agencies, our personal information is constantly being collected and analyzed. This can create a sense of anxiety and unease, with people not knowing who has access to this data and not knowing what all data is being compromised and personal secrets are being pried. People also don't know how the data will be used. The use of eyeballs in place of pomegranate seeds thus serves as a potent symbol of this dystopian reality, where we are constantly watched and scrutinized by unseen forces. These eyeballs represent surveillance,

which can further exacerbate social anxiety as people feel they are being observed and judged by many strangers. The pomegranate being cut open to reveal its interior also suggests the privacy of being dissected.

In today's society, the leakage of personal information and the eavesdropping function of cell phones make people's every move to be watched, web page push comes from browsing history, social media reads data from address book and photo album, and there is no privacy in modern society. This leads to a possible dystopian future of surveillance, and the work elicits discomfort and fear in the viewer through strong contrasts.

PROCESS



WAX SCULPT

TECHNIQUES





RUBBER MOLD MAKING

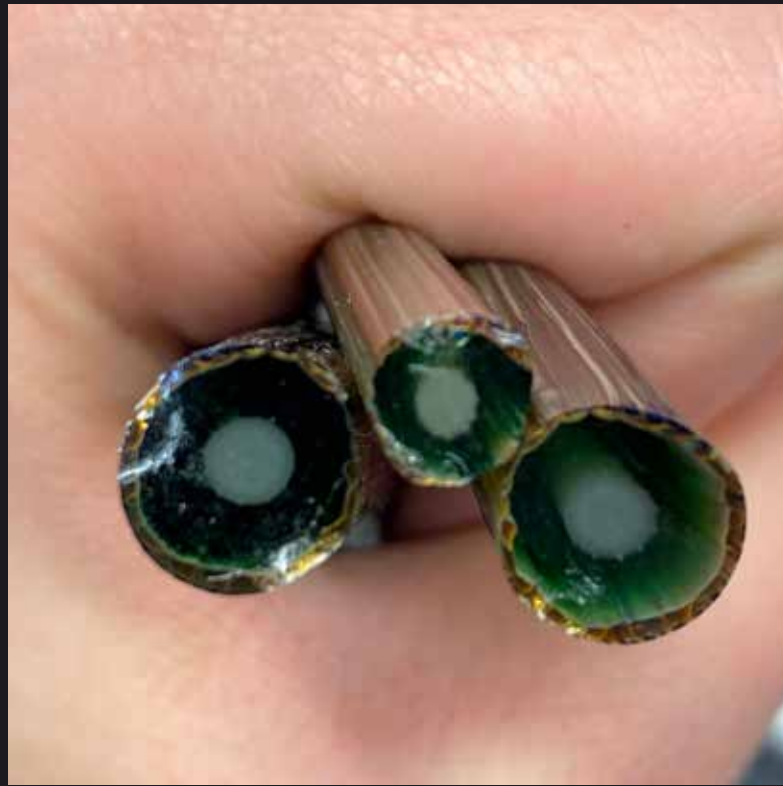




MOLD MAKING

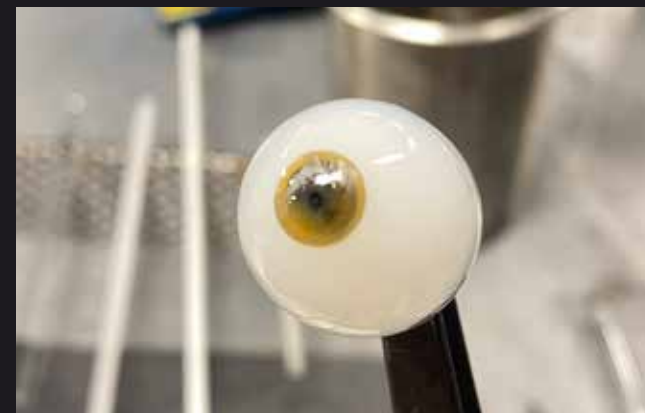
LOST WAX & PEEEPARE KILN





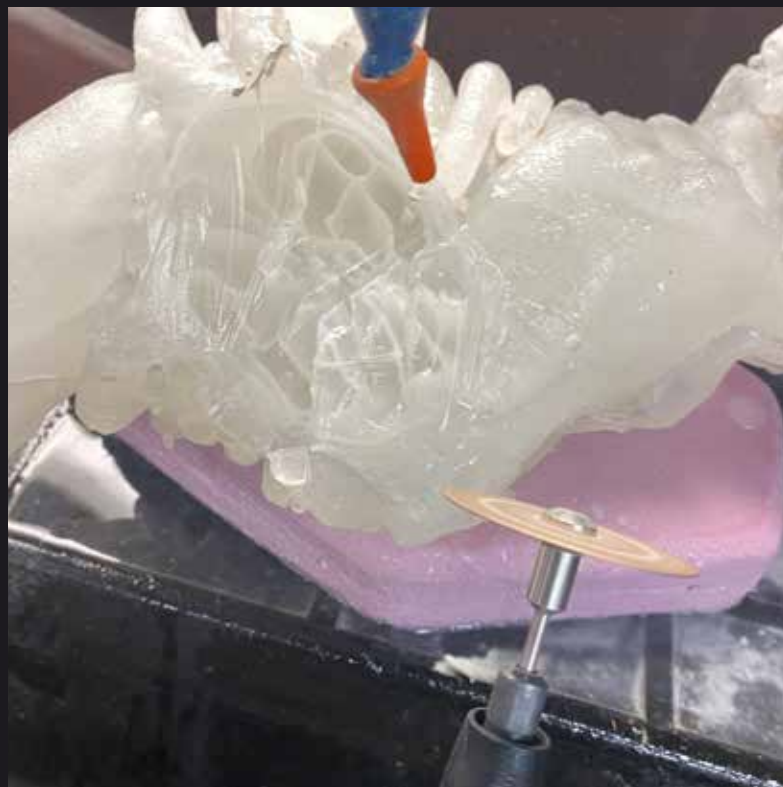
FLAMEWORK

3D SCANNING & PRINTING





COLD WORKING.....



ANALYSIS

During the capstone project, I experimented with applying other technologies to glass making, such as 3d printing. I used a real pomegranate for 3d scanning, and then enlarged the volume of the model before printing it out. I experimented with casting larger pieces, which was definitely a challenge. I encountered many challenges in the model making process, such as the "hand" piece, where I worked on how to make the molten glass flow better. By making larger items I realized a lot of things I hadn't paid attention to before, and that I needed to be careful in every step of making them. For larger piece, the rubber mold making need to be careful, I failed once with first time making big scale rubber mold. Then I fix the mistake by remade it.

For further, I would like to try more big cast. And I will try to combine other techniques with glass.

WORKS













To be completed.....









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Boezio Alessandro from <http://boezioalessandro.com/>

Matt Domino The Nightmarish Works of H.R. Giger, the Artist behind "Alien" from [artsy.net](https://www.artsy.net)

ZDZISLAW BEKSINSKI from www.shopbeksinski.com/home/about-beksinski/

IMAGE LIST

Figure1: Lovecraft from www.britannica.com/biography/H-P-Lovecraft

Figure2: TheArtist Website About Afzal Ibrahim An experimenter at heart <https://www.theartist.me/artwork>

Figure3: Boezio Alessandro from <http://boezioalessandro.com/>

Figure4: H.R. Giger, Courtesy of the H.R. Giger Museum.

Figure5: ZDZISLAW BEKSINSKI www.artnet.com/artists/zdzislaw-beksinski/

"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown."

—HP LOVECRAFT