

Descriptions

“Gentle sight”— Oil on canvas, top left

“Mis dos vidas” (My two lives)— Oil on canvas, top right

“Familia”— Oil on canvas, middle left

“Her” — Oil on canvas, middle middle

“Viva la vida” — Oil on canvas, middle right

“Untitled”— Oil on canvas, bottom left

“Untitled”— crayon pencil on paper, bottom right

Barbara Peña: ¿Para sue sufrir? — Born and raised in Mexico, my artistic influenced were always highly colourful, its a token of Mexico's vibrancy as shown through nature, artesian culture and folklore. Frida Kahlo is a great example of this, she never shied away from colors as they come with no need to mute these. This wasn't the only thing that made me gravitate towards Frida as inspiration for my series this semester, but her unapologetic representation of herself, in different circumstances that represented her feelings. I personally always found it too self grandiose to paint myself so I never did, but this semester, having done it twice, was a healing representation of myself and my life; all the control entailed into seeing myself in art, interacting with different symbols, just like Frida.

In lieu of my admiration of Mexican women, I've named my series "Para que sufrir? Based on Natalia Lafourcade's same titled song, talking about enjoying the little pleasures in life and that life is beautiful and fruitful despite hard times.

In my exploration of Frida Kahlo, I've recreated her "**Viva la Vida**" painting. I've chosen this since it was the last painting ever created by Frida, the most melancholic in my opinion. I went outside my comfort zone, and used vibrant colours: I usually lean towards more muted colours such as the Italian renaissance paintings. This movement is my favorite I would say in matter of paintings, and it is a striking juxtaposition against's Frida's surrealist 20th century art, and in my "**Gentle Sight**" painting, I've imitated Artemisia Gentileschi's painting, but with my face on it, with a serious expression on my face. Both the self-portrait and solemn expression aspect are a nod towards Frida. She wears the same expression in her "Self Portrait Along the Boarder Line Between Mexico and the United States," a painting I've used as inspiration for a painting comparing my life in Mexico versus Italy (**Mis dos vidas**). I've added representations from them such as my favorite Mexican holiday, Dia de Muertos, my home city's mountain, the imitative dramatic galaxy sky of street spray painters in the Quintana Roo and Yuucatan states, and in the Italy side, my boyfriend, my boyfriend's cat, the colosseum and an Italian villa in the countryside.

I also wanted to depict Frida herself, and I did in ways I've never seen her represented in: several vibrant colours in my Untitled pieces, and her from the back in "***Her***," a perspective she never represented herself in, and to me it signifies looking at things from a different perspective.

My final piece of the semester Familia, illustrates my mom and two grandmas in Mexican attires, with my home city mountain. It signifies how my people's heritage is ever present, and alive within us, just like these women in my life. I admire women's strength like Frida's, but I don't know other women more resilient than the women in this paintings. Art to me is about highlighting the oppressed and overlooked aspects of life, and as gracefully as Frida did, these are my takes on it.

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