Heila-Marie Myburgh

*‘All eyes on Her’*

My body of work represents the inequality and dehumanised and sexualised portrayal of women in not only general media but also throughout art history. Through the symbolism of anatomically representative flowers I aimed to capture the vulnerable and confrontational portrayal of femininity and the derogatory ideologies surrounding female genitalia. By manipulating the positioning of my oil painted eyes and flowers I aimed to challenge, ignite and provoke perspectives regarding the conceptual ideas of the male gaze and moreover the impact these stereotypes have on art and the female phsyke. Through the composition of my major “All eyes on Her'', through the utilisation of oil paints varying from a range of subtle “classically feminine” colours such as pinks and whites, I aimed to capture the beauty of femininity, fertility and womanhood by making the collection of flowers the catalyst for my body of work. I incorporated techniques from artists such as Georgia O’keefe and Judy Chicago to embrace rather than shame and judge the femininity of genitalia and the stereotypes surrounding females within mainstream society.I wanted to challenge and confront my audience with the exposure and portrayal of female genitalia, hoping to break negative and taboo ideas regarding genitalia in society. In contrast to my collection of gentle and subtly composed flowers, I utilised and drew inspiration from art styles such as Fauvism and modernism when composing my collection of male eyes. The harsh contrast of colours and art styles between the flowers and eyes captured the inequality differences between the portrayal of genders within society. Moreover the eyes also represent the harshness and destructive nature of toxic masculinity and the judgemental expectations that come from societal ideas regarding gender roles and expectations. Originally I was going to utilise mediums that I was more familiar with such as watercolour, but instead I decided to venture outside of my comfort zone and explore a new medium, oil paint. Although It was rather a challenge as it was rather unfamiliar to me, it was rather enjoyable exploring new mediums and techniques, which were inspired by my chosen art styles and artists.