

Look What I Made!' *'Midshot'* *'And He'll Call It Vanity'*

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Rubber-Block Printing

This triptych highlights the abusive behaviour enabled by the myth of artistic genius. I researched multiple sources on artistic genius' role in enabling abusive power structures. Historically euro/male-centric perceptions have defined what and who can be considered 'genius', leading 'artistic genius' to act as an extension of white-male power by placing them above typical moral expectations (Delistraty, 2020, Hess, 2017). This view was supported by my research into immoral artistic geniuses such as Roman Polanski, Pablo Picasso, and Damien Hirst (Hess, 2017, Lee, 2017, Malik, 2021). I annotated and used this research to develop multiple concepts and techniques in my visual diary. After developing three sketches I refined them digitally to create clean linework. The designs were transferred and carved into rubber blocks, which were covered with black ink to print. To refine my carving skills I created multiple practice prints. In future works, I'd properly store the blocks in a clean space, preventing the coagulation of dust or unwanted imprints that resulted in an uneven ink application in my final prints.

The triptych employs several techniques to portray the potential moral cost of art and thereby criticise the privilege given by 'artistic genius.' *Look What I Made!*'s minotaur figure is shrouded in dark hues and gazes directly at the viewer, frightening them. This fear is affiliated with artistic genius through the symbolism of the minotaur. Picasso, an artist whose genius 'excused' their misogyny, used minotaurs as a symbol for himself, depicting them raping or attacking women (Lee, 2017, Takac, 2021). Religious imagery was used to enhance the print's message. The purity of the sacrificial lamb symbolises the innocent victims abused to preserve artistic genius. The halo-like circle above the minotaur and his symmetrical composition imply he is sacred, reflecting the deification of artistic geniuses. *And He'll Call It Vanity* visualises the dehumanisation behind the practice of obscuring a woman's face for modesty in a physical beheading, leading the viewer to consider the hidden struggle of the muses behind many 'genius' artworks. The stark white colour of the female figure resembles the marble of antiquity statues and a corpse, discomfiting the viewer and revealing the often obscured abuse behind an artwork. The composition and value of the work mimic how artistic genius distracts from immorality, the contrast between the spotlight and the dark surroundings, the direction of the artist's body, the straight lines of his beard, and the curve of the pulled sheet, direct the viewer's eye towards the artwork and away them from the woman's head obscured by the artist's leg. *Midshot* references Steve McCurry's photo of green-eyed refugee Sharbat Gula in its visuals. McCurry disregarded Gula's wishes, using his power to force her to uncover her face and pose for a photo (Karnad, 2019). The ambiguous imagery of the swirling pattern, which resembles the barrel of a camera and a gun, references this history, leading the viewer to reflect on the coercive, abusive means behind many artistic geniuses' processes. This moral reflection is amplified by the sympathetic depiction of the girl, whose large eyes emphasise her youth and terror.

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