The focus of my work is to explore negative human emotion and its impact on our interaction with others, with “connection” and “anxiety” being underlying themes present in the works. The themes of connection and anxiety spur from past experience dealing with anxiety and rejection, fostering a want for belonging and inclusion within a group. My interest in visual storytelling from video-games, graphic novels, and film shape the presentation of my pieces to be illustrative or graphic in their design.

My first work, Complexity, is a self-portrait painting influenced by Andy Warhol’s 1964 ‘*Self Portrait*’. Warhol’s portrait - much like his other works - were used to change people’s interpretation of himself, with the specific piece showing Warhol’s inner turmoil through a focus on the lack of emotion in his face. Complexity builds upon his idea by showing my internal battle with anxiety through my lack of emotion in conjunction with the bold red background emphasizing the turmoil happening consciously. Through this struggle, the eyes placement at eye-level establishes a desire for connection by looking for understanding and empathy from the viewer themselves. The choice to make this piece a painting rather than my traditional mediums: graphite and colored pencils, was to use bold colors, heavy line weight, shape, and scale to place emphasis on the emotional impact conveyed.

Self Doubting Myself was an illustration that - in contrast to Complexity’s subtlety - directly depicts my struggle with anxiety and its impact on me trying to connect with others via texting. The work takes a narrative approach to its message, depicting anxiety through a physical representation of a monster instead of symbolically through the color red. The exclusion of my face illustrates reservation and the lack of a desire to connect due to anxiety’s control. Graphite was used as the medium for this work to create texture through the repetition of line to create form and movement.

These works build upon their idea of connection figuratively by putting a part of myself in the work to resonate with the viewer. I’ve achieved this in my recent works through emotional illustrations or comic panels where characters are either working together to achieve a goal or end a conflict, or are being separated by an obstacle.