Self Portrait

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The self portrait, as a process of introspection proved to be a challenging task. A blank canvas became an intimidating invitation to express an unknown. The question of how one sees themselves, is not such a simple one when presented with the contrasting viewpoint of how one wants to be seen. This incongruency was a marked struggle for me. I wanted to be genuine in my attempts and yet felt a resistance to the idea of transparency, most so, for myself.

Heidegger, as Dr. Laurie describes, identifies the phenomenological view; all periods of time to be regarded as the self understands all time to be interrelated. This encourages a sense of cautious curiosity. Though I am resistant to the deep contemplation I am open to heightened awareness. If this self expression does indeed lead to greater self acceptance, I am willing to engage in this new experience as the idea that externalizing problems can bring order to chaos and foster healing insights is one that evokes skeptical optimism.

The process was difficult as I do not typically use art materials in creative expression. This would mark the first time I have attempted to draw myself in any capacity. I was instantly frustrated with my notable lack of ability with the medium. The image in my mind was not the one my hands could create. After several efforts to create what I was intending to put on canvas, my final portrait retains elements that were present in all the prior attempts. Firstly, each of the portraits were of a profile. I suppose this to reflect the vulnerability of the endeavour. I unconsciously rejected the idea of my portrait making eye contact. The other notable feature is the colouring used on the cheek and neck area. This rosy pink looks as though the portrait is flushed, perhaps blushing, another reflection of the vulnerability in such transparency. Furthermore, the portrait takes up approximately 40% of the canvas, positioned near the boarder, hovering on the perimeter. Though I wonder if it is more so of a matter of absent natural talent, one cannot help but note the frightened expression on the portrait. The pale blue of the watercolour background reflect distance or withdrawing and the purple intermixed, reflects the need to control ((Ponsford-Hill, 2018). Both elements are ones that ring true. I purposed to not review the symbolism or colour significance before beginning the project so as not to influence myself with conscious intentions. I wanted to experiment with what evolved naturally.

Overall, this is a process I would revisit in the future and see what changes. I do hope to use more creative means with clients in session. Experimenting with the process myself and leaning more about artistic expression during the therapy process is something I will continue to explore.