

*A Thought in my Head*

As an individual trying to navigate this time in life, it often seems as if there are not enough hours in the day to tackle every issue that arises. The usual thoughts, growing pains, and reconciliation of personal identity that most young adults grapple with is now compounded with the political strife, financial hardship, inequality of race and class, and a global pandemic infecting over 13.7million people just here in America. With so many things going on in the world and our personal lives, it has been difficult for many to deal with mental health issues as they tend to seem less important given the fact that our world is on fire (literally and figuratively).

In this series titled *A Thought in My Head*, I use a variety of mixed media and digital techniques to create self-portraits discussing topics of self-identity, mental health, and introspection. This project spurs a dialog with the viewer about these issues as much as it is a deeply personal expression and exploration of my own thoughts and emotions.

As I try to process and accept who I am as a person and try to place myself among countless others, I am creating this visual record to help cope and sort out my own experience. While fabricating these pieces, the way I chose to curate the work, as well as the style in which my art is created, feels chaotic, yet orderly. The work is direct, in your face, and honest. The words and phrases I have chosen are taken from my journal and placed next to drawings and paintings of creatures, shapes, and colors that make up a visual environment that is entirely myself. This work is the closest I can get to looking within myself and the thoughts I have. The processing of these thoughts can often make me feel as if I am isolated, lost, and indecisive. This series was created to fashion a meditative and reflective environment in which I live among the thoughts and conversations I have with myself.

The work lives amidst the passing of thoughts in what seems to be infinite space and between the characters in my brain. For there I exist in my most comfortable form and feel the most myself. This series highlights issues of self-identity, mental health, and isolation in a stylized way in hopes of communicating a message to the viewer that what we are experiencing is all normal. It is not always easy to confront things we've bottled up for years. It doesn't always feel okay to be alone and sometimes people feel more alone in a room full of people than they do laying alone in the dark. It is okay to feel deranged, to be scared about the future, and to regret the past.

If the viewer can reconsider how they treat themselves, among others with mental health issues, as well as somehow relate to the work in their own personal way, I feel as if my work has done its job. Creating conversations about mental health and self-identity can positively shift the way we all view these issues and potentially can make it easier for others who feel like they don't have a voice.