

# *State of Mind*

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Though this piece was inspired by Alzheimer's, this piece also delves into the idea of losing oneself as well as one's memory. The idea of puzzle pieces disappearing into the fog is a terrifying nightmare for many. The woman frowns down at the vanishing memory of the people in the pictures.

*Disappearing*



## *Triggers*

Triggers was inspired by post traumatic stress disorder, but triggers are not unique to PTSD. Behind the seemingly controlled woman are three aspects of herself as she is thrown back into memories. Anger, fear, and despair are common emotions experienced by a triggering event. The dominoes represent the idea that it is very hard to halt the memories once a triggering event has occurred.

# *Paranoia*



This piece was inspired by Paranoid Schizophrenia. Questioning reality is not unique to Paranoid Schizophrenia, however, and often occurs when a person experiences gas-lighting as well. In this painting the woman looked into a shattered mirror and sees herself reflected while a transparent doctor takes notes, and a ghostly figure stands over her shoulder ready to stab her in the back.

This piece was inspired by bi-polarism and tackles the idea that sufferers can lose everything they hold dear because of the emotional hand that they are dealt. The viewer is holding a hand of cards, while in the center, a diploma, money, rings, keys, a watch, and a baby bottle are on the table. All these precious items stand to be gambled away by a manic or depressive episode.



## *High - Stakes Emotions*



## *E n e r g y*

Energy was inspired by kitsugi, a Japanese practice of repairing broken objects with gold. The broken piece, shot through with gold, is more beautiful than the original. In this image the woman is holding an impossibly broken glass which is leaking jewel like water. Even as she tries to drink the life sustaining fluid, it leaks out. This imagery is meant to represent the energy level of those who have suffered trauma. Even with the same resources, energy leaks from them before they can truly obtain the benefits.

Insomnia is one symptom that is shared by many. At night when the thoughts plague you, it can feel as if there are invisible hands prying your eyes open as your mind races.



*I n s o m n i a*

In these pieces a woman sits in a tree drawing. But it is not the beautiful lake that sits in front of her, but rather a dark twisted landscape where a woman walked through as hands reach up to grab her from the very floor. This piece is



meant to represent the idea that too many thoughts, especially of the past can lead to a darker place, and possibly end in depression.



*C o n t e m p l a t i o n*



## *Depression*

This piece was the first piece that I ever made that dealt with mental illness. It represents the daily struggle as a woman walks down a seemingly endless hall lined

with chess pieces that look on. The very floor pulls and drags her down as she moves. Each square of the floor represents a day of the year.



# Smile

These pieces represent the daily struggle that many people experience. The idea that one must smile no matter what they are truly experiencing. In a world where “resting bitch



face” is criticised and eternal optimists are praised, it is easy to forget that one emotion is just as valid as the other. Tragedy looks back from the mirror even though comedy grins openly into it.



## *P a s s i n g*

This piece was inspired by the idea that a person can pretend to fit until stress causes them to unravel showing their true selves. In this case, an apple is revealed beneath the skin of an orange.





## *A n x i e t y*

This piece was inspired by anxiety which is a comorbid diagnosis. In the center a woman is consumed by anxiety while hands reach out for her. She is so consumed by anxiety she fails to notice the helping hand reaching out for her.



## *D r e a m s*

This piece was inspired by the idea of being lifted up by ones hopes and dreams. The flight can be terrifying as one reaches for the stars. For a variety of reasons, a person can remain tethered to the ground, however. For people with mental illnesses dreams may seem impossible, they may feel like they will be forever tethered to the ground.



This piece was inspired by grief. The woman sits, unmoved, unfeeling, in the center. Her hands scorched by fire, and frozen by ice, but she feels nothing. Inside her bubble she is numb, unfeeling.

*N u m b*



## *House of Cards*

This piece was inspired by my own personal struggle with mental illness. Cutting ties, forming ties, the shadow, art, writing, D&D, and fur babies. I am more than the sum of my parts, but to deny any part would result in my house of cards collapsing.



This body of work explores mental health issues from the sufferers' perspective. The purpose of my work is not voyeurism or sensationalism, but rather an attempt to help sufferers find a voice. Using symbolism and metaphors inspired by case studies and research, I create and photograph a scene for each mental illness. I then manipulate and translate this scene into another medium.

Feeling understood is a major component of creating the social support system that is critical for successful recovery from most illnesses. It is my hope that by adding these visual vocabularies to discussions, I can help people obtain the support they need.

Many of the surrealistic worlds that are manipulated using Photoshop. This digital form of surrealism is currently spreading commercially as well as privately, and owes much of its success to the legacy of historical surrealism. I chose to take the photo manipulations that I create and translate them back into more historical mediums of oil painting, printmaking, and charcoal. I felt this conversion to a "traditional" medium is necessary to reengage viewers who have become numb to photo manipulations due to their pervasiveness.