



Midsommar Explained

Midsommar is a folk horror film written and directed by Ari Aster. The film is about a dysfunctional couple who travel to Sweden with a group of friends for a midsummer festival, only to find themselves in the clutches of a sinister cult practicing Scandinavian paganism. Dani, the main character, loses her family at the beginning of the film. The movie is mainly focused on her emotional journey; Dani loses her family in the beginning, she splits with her toxic boyfriend Christian and goes on to find a new set of family in the Hårga Cult. In the end, Dani is the only member of her friend group that survives till the end.

Many view the movie as a powerful study of grief, betrayal, breakups, and rebirth.

The movie is pretty much completely fictional. The midsummer celebrations celebrated by the Hårga Cult do not depict an accurate representation of a realistic midsummer celebration.

I am very interested in the themes surrounding the film (grief, rebirth, etc.) especially the main character Dani, and the cinema photography and the Swedish style folk art and also Dani's floral May Queen dress at the end of the film.

Ari Aster

Ari Aster wrote and directed the film Midsommar (2019). The film is mainly inspired by Swedish culture but he also looked at British and German folklore. Aster knew little about Swedish culture before writing Midsommar. He travelled to Sweden and visited folklore museums and centuries-old preserved farms which had paintings on the walls which inspired a lot of the art in the film. Aster focused on the supernatural elements of Swedish culture. He included all the classic elements of summer solstice celebrations such as flower gathering and dancing as well as spiking the movie with some dark cultish horror.

These are pictures of flowers from magazines I cut out and made into a collage. It reminded me of Dani's May Queen outfit.

Dani when she becomes May Queen

Shuffles by Pinterest

Shuffles is an app created by Pinterest which allows you to create collages using images from your phone or saved pins from your Pinterest account.

collage I created on my phone

app logo

DANI

Dani is the main character in the Midsommar movie. As seen with the photos, her character develops. She goes from being an American tourist to being crowned as May Queen.

Pull ↓

Georgia O'Keeffe

Georgia O'Keeffe was an American modernist artist. She was born in 1887 and died in 1986. O'Keeffe is most famous for her depiction of flowers. She painted around 200 flower paintings.

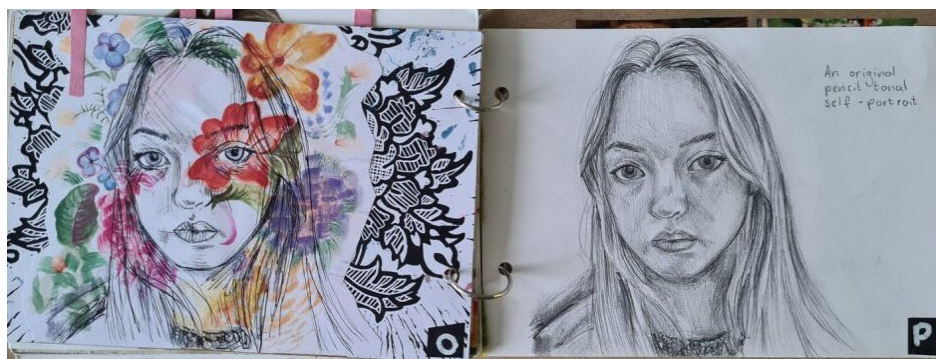
Hibiscus with plumaria (1934)

Strawberries

real strawberries

In Sweden, strawberries are traditionally eaten around midsummer time. On the left, I pressed real strawberries onto paper and on the right, I tried to create the same effect but with watercolour paints.


water colour



traditional foods

MIDSUMMER

The Midsummer movie was inspired by the midsummer celebrations in Sweden. The celebration is usually held at a date around summer solstice. The celebration has pagan pre-Christian roots. Swedes traditionally dance around a maypole that is decorated in flowers. Traditional midsummer foods include pickled herring, fresh potatoes and strawberries.



midsummer pole / maypole


PAOLO PICASSO




On this page behind I recreated a scene of the midsummer movie in a style similar to Vincent van Gogh. In this scene, the characters had taken mushrooms, which I think Van Gogh's style links to this as he paints in a distorted way.



behind

VAN GOGH



gel printing

I experimented with gel printing. I used floral stamps and leaves to create shapes and inprints onto the designs. I think gel prints could make a great background to future pieces and compositions especially if I link the designs to midsummer imagery and themes.

Frida Kahlo

Self portrait dedicated to Dr. Eloesser, 1940, by Frida Kahlo

Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter best known for her self-portraits that were inspired by Mexican folk culture and plants and nature.



Advanced Higher Art and Design: Expressive portfolio evaluation	
Candidate name:	<input type="text"/>
Candidate number:	<input type="text"/>
Centre number:	<input type="text"/>
State your theme or stimulus and give a summary of your creative intentions	
<p>I chose the film Midsommar as my main source of inspiration. So, I will be incorporating flowers into my portraits and other imagery for the film into portfolio. I would also love to show the dark story of the film under the bright and colourful cinematography. I am very interested in experimenting with a variety of mediums such as acrylic, watercolour, collage and lino print.</p>	
Give a brief explanation of how your contextual analysis relates to your practical work	
<p>Frida Kahlo often depicts pain and suffering in her work, which links to Midsommar as a horror movie and I will express that by painting with dark colours or imagery. Frida also paints lots of flowers and paints on or around her, I will be including flowers in my work as flowers symbolise rebirth in the film Midsommar and they appear throughout the film. Frida mainly paints self-portraits and I will also be painting/drawing myself in my pieces.</p>	
Instructions to candidates	
<p>Evaluate the impact of important creative decisions and the effectiveness of artwork with reference to the theme or stimulus, creative intentions and specific turning points.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(6 marks)</p>	
<p>I wanted to try out new techniques for my pieces so I experimented with gelprinting, I really loved how I could include flowers and lots of patterns and colours into each print. With watercolour paints, I did a self portrait and another painting of two flowers. I liked how the water colour paintings looked soft and flowy ,it brings a calm atmosphere the the piece but I can still add excitement by using bright colours. On one sheet I painted myself with acrylics and then photocopied the painting and created collages with it. For one I cut the copy up and then arranged it over a piece of gel print that was red and black, I liked how the pink and yellow painting contrasts with the dark colours I the back. For the other, I cut the copy up and glued real flowers I pressed myself around the subject. I felt the real flowers gave the piece an organic feel. I made two lino prints. One of myself and another of a flower. I experimented with these prints by layering them over previous peices. I liked how they looked on a gel print as I thought it could make a good background for a future piece and then I tried layering the lino print on top of a self portriat with watercolour paints. I wasn't so keen on how it turned out as I felt that the lino print pattern covered up some nice details on the watercolour portrait. Instead ,I thought, it would be better behind the subject. I created a couple collages using photos. I made one digitally and I liked how I was able to layer and blend multiple photos together I think it creates a soft apperance. I created two final pieces. The first one I thought was too messy because the gel print and motifs look to caotic. The subject is looking towards the darkness to create a mysterious atmosphere. For my second final piece I painted a self portrait using watercolour paints, I used bright colours. And I used my floral lino print on black on red paper for the background to contrast with the light, bright watercolour painting. This links to Midsommar because the dark background symbolises the dark story of the film underneath the bright summery cinema photography which is represented by the watercolours. I planned to use real pressed flowers around the final piece but there wernt any available so I used pictures of flowers I cut out. I liked how I cut out parts of the subjects face and layered flowers because I think it creates an unsettling atmoshphere which links to the horror side of the film as well as the bright and summery part too.</p>	

Commentary on candidate 1 evidence

Section 1 – Practical expressive artwork

Marks range description: Candidates provide evidence of their ability to respond to their theme or stimulus by producing a visually coherent and sustained creative process. This should show relevant investigative research and development leading to the effective resolution and realisation of artwork.

The stimulus for this expressive portfolio is the folk horror film 'Midsommar'. The candidate explores ways in which the portraits, combined with folk art imagery, can be given an unsettling, psychedelic appearance.

This portfolio comes with a thorough explanation. The creative process is presented with a detailed written commentary on each sheet. There is also an A-to-Z collage book that explains the way an investigation of the film has stimulated ideas. The development of these ideas, which features watercolour, acrylic, gel printing, lino cutting and collage, shows how the candidate has incorporated elements of 'Midsommar' in a progressively ambitious way. This culminates in two self-portraits that bring together the various techniques and ideas. This is a highly effective development of ideas that shows a strong visual coherence.

This part of Section 1 was awarded 30 of the 32 marks available.

Marks range description: Candidates provide evidence of their ability to apply their understanding of art practice by skilfully and creatively using materials, techniques and/or technology to explore and experiment with visual elements.

To express their ideas about 'Midsommar', the candidate brought together the experimental effects of print making and collage with closely observed drawing and portrait painting. The lino and gel printing makes an effective contribution to the development of ideas, it is successfully collaged into the resolved works. The watercolour and acrylic painting show a skilful use of materials with an understanding of graduated tone and colour variation. The combination of techniques used here is highly effective, although there is room for further development.

This part of Section 1 was awarded 26 of the 32 marks available.

Section 1 sub-total for practical artwork: 56

Section 2 – Contextual Analysis

Marks range description: Candidates provide evidence of their ability to select an artwork with relevance to their practical expressive artwork and discuss the impact of related contexts through analysis of the features of the artwork.

In the evaluation template, the candidate explains the choice of Frida Kahlo as a topic for the contextual analysis, by saying that the artist's paintings of flowers and her troubled life connected her to 'Midsommar'. The symbolism of flowers is touched on, and the biography of the artist is laid out in a series of bullet pointed statements. Some of these factual pieces are linked to the work and show the impact of relevant context, but others are disconnected pieces of information. The candidate has written a strong analysis of 'The Two Fridas'. This is done by addressing colour, focal point, subject matter, scale, and there is a brief note on composition. Most of the points are carefully justified and some, such as their reference to the dark blue turbulent sky, are effectively discussed, with statements such as: 'This could represent what's going on in her head; she may feel conflicted, angry or even miserable'.

This section was awarded 20 of the 30 marks available.

Section 3 – Evaluation

Marks range description: Candidates provide evidence of their ability to evaluate the impact of creative decisions and the effectiveness of their artwork with reference to the theme or stimulus, creative intentions, and specific turning points.

Many notes accompany each image, making it evident that the candidate is keen to explain their thoughts. The evaluation has a fluency and thoroughness. The candidate suggests that the film theme gave them a pretext to develop their enjoyment of floral painting, and there are also self-critical remarks. At all times there are justifications and explanations of each step.

This evaluation was awarded 6 of the 6 marks available.

Total: 82 marks