



THE IDENTITY OF THE FACES: ANIMATED ILLUSTRATION INSPIRED BY YVETTE CHUA AND FERNANDA DIAS

*Mariana Muñoz Gonzalez, student of Digital Arts,
University of Guanajuato, Mexico*

*Victor Reyes Espino, Master's degree, professor of the department of Art,
University of Guanajuato, Mexico*

As a result of the human need to express their identity, portrait is discovered, one of the pillars of great relevance in art. Since ancient times, ways of representing the human figure have been sought, generating new trends in the form of sculptures or paintings, which led to busts or murals with large portraits of characters, including gods. The experience of the portrait in the world has developed the art form, in its constant search to find new ways to represent the human being, politically, for kings or presidents, or as a form of personal expression of an individual who wishes to leave a legacy of his existence and personality. Freeland (2010) states that “portraiture is one of the most universal and long-standing art forms, dating back to the ancient civilizations of Egypt, India, China, Athens, and Rome...” (p. 1). The search for new illustration tools leads to the exploration of digital techniques and has as consequence the emergence of the digital portrait, an artistic method where faces are created by non-traditional means, such as paper or canvas. The digital portrait consists of a variety of various expressive forms and supports, however, in this project we will focus solely on digital animation and illustration.

The digital portraits to be shown are an analysis of the concept of beauty of the author Martin Heidegger, as well as other concepts of the same author that will be the theoretical basis of our works. Since it is important that the diverse types of beauty are discovered, just as every person deserves to be represented in a worthy way within art, this is how it is possible to take the different personalities that exist and propose personalized spaces. In the field of digital painting, the illustrator Yvette Chus was used as a reference. While in relation to 2D animation, the artist Fernanda Dias was investigated.

Therefore, in this project we **intend to demonstrate** that Heidegger's assumptions about truth and the technical and stylistic definitions of Chua and Dias, helped to define our own artistic style and concept for the creation of portraits in digital painting. To achieve the dignified representation of the person and to demonstrate that beauty is not represented under a stereotyped standard, but based on a true judgment, as Heidegger affirms.

This work is a sample of a personal portfolio that was developed between 2020 and 2022, conformed of digital portraits of real and fictional people (figure 1). The technique of our illustrations consists of digital painting together with 2D animations, which maintain the style of the work. Created using the *Clip Studio Paint* program with light movements that bring the illustrations to life; the animations used for some of the portraits are loops of moving eyes and objects around the character.

As for the technical and visual references, the illustrator Yvette Chua was chosen, which combines digital painting with character creation in her graphic novels. From her we rescue palettes of more opaque colors such as beige and white or black backgrounds, with strokes that resemble oil paintings. Another of its stylistic characteristics was the use of backgrounds that help reveal the importance of the character in the space of the composition, the settings are simple to focus the gaze on the character.



On the other hand, the animator Fernanda Días places her characters on scenes full of color and expression. Among her techniques, she presents a clean line, filled with warm vibrant colors in contrast to lines with darker tones. Although her present style contains more cartoonish characteristics, some of the digital painting techniques can still be seen in the animation, which inspired the animations of the artworks in the portfolio.



Figure 1 – Digital painting. We can see all the portraits in https://ugtomx-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/m_munozgonzalez_ugto_mx/EtJX8i7VQu9InSMs9P3vNkBLpuKrGYrvqzZ9OoPgeSoxw?e=ZCpYTA

Although Dias and Chuan have different styles in technique and color, both represent the portrait with characterization of the character from the composition of the artwork. Their references established the portrait as the main point of the portfolio, seeking to represent beauty, as Heidegger suggests, from the truth.

It is necessary to critically approach stereotypes of beauty, so as not to fall into their reproduction. Heidegger defends the truth and criticizes the fine arts for the superficiality that exists in it. The purpose of works of art within the fine arts is to represent the physical characteristics that make the object beautiful, according to a standard proposed by a society. It is created to be beautiful, and it is beautiful to be art, because "...until now art had to do with the beautiful (dem Schönen) and beauty (der Schönheit), and not with truth." (Heidegger, 1935, p. 20).

When seeking to represent beauty, in the case of contemporary portraiture, the standard of Western beauty, white skin, small nose, blue eyes, among other Eurocentric features, is mainly taken as a reference. Even outside the American continent, the impact they have is evident, for example "...it has been shown that both Asian men and women rate Whites as being more physically attractive than Asians ..." (Chin Evans, 2003, p. 155). For this reason, in our portraits we seek to represent the different human races, inspire *true beauty* to break with those imposed stereotypes of Western beauty.

According to Heidegger, what is true is not what is seen, for example, a pair of shoes. But a knowledge of its usefulness, it is a pair of shoes with which you work the land and



then reliability is attributed to it: "Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field path as evening falls." (Heidegger, 1935, p. 17).

The person in the portrait cannot be the same as the thing since it is not usefulness if not its qualities that make its true being. The woman in the portrait is beautiful because her hairstyle and makeup represent a personality that she herself builds. It was its true essence that managed to discover its beauty, "The true essence of a thing is determined from its true being, from the truth of the corresponding entity." (Heidegger, 1935, p.14)

In this sense, we use our works as a channel for the truth, drawing not only the person, but also looking for their true essence. By painting a specific part of the portrait, the author realizes the unique beauty that it has, for example, painting a woman, noticing that her red hair stands out like the color of a cherry, and using the fruit to represent that feeling is how the beauty that the author found in her is discovered. Recognizing its true being, the artist's goal is to transmit its beauty through light, strokes, and colors, " The work of art gave us to know what the shoe-tool is in truth." (Heidegger, 1935, p. 19), but in this case it has made us know the truth of beauty in a person.

Consequently, beauty becomes a tool for truth within the work, just as color, composition and strokes are used. For example, as a portrait artist, one has the responsibility to seek the truth of a person, since Heidegger says that the work is the channel through which the truth is discovered. Then we can affirm that " When truth sets itself in the work, beauty appears." (Heidegger, 1935, p. 63). Beauty is a way of being of the truth.

Like an artist, the viewer must also search for the truth. Applying this theory in the portrait, the public is given the opportunity to judge a person by seeing only the physical appearance, the two paths that can be taken is to make an unconscious judgment based on aesthetic standards, this person is beautiful because she has blue eyes and all people with blue eyes are beautiful. Or a conscious judgment where you look beyond the superficial, her blue eyes are beautiful, her smile stands out because together with her makeup they make her lips stand out. Beauty does not depend on a single collective thought, as Heidegger already criticized. If not, it is the *unconcealment* of being that forms its true beauty.

Conclusions. The created portfolio is an invitation, both for the person portrayed and the spectator, to create judgments not marked by a stereotype, to create a true judgment. Beauty is not defined, nor materialized, it is necessary to find the truth of the being to assume that someone is beautiful. In any case, if truth can be found in all beings, it is because they are all beautiful in a unique way. Despite the possibility of changing the way the viewer judges, the judgment that can be given from a single image does not fully define the individual, it is a limited judgment. But the reality of the situation that is discovered is only a portion of a person's experiences. Then the truth of the person is discovered only at that age, at that moment in which he was painted, however, the person is still beautiful. Finally, it was possible to represent the reference artists, on the one hand, Chua's non-flashy backgrounds and color palettes were incorporated. At the same time, intense color contrasts and looping animations used by Dias were included. Our works formed a different concept, animations with dark color palettes.

References

1. Chin Evans, P., & McConnell, A.R. (2003). Do racial minorities respond in the same way to mainstream beauty standards? Social comparison processes in Asian, Black, and White women. *Self and identity*, 2 (2), 153-167.
2. Freeland, C. (2010). *Portraits and persons*. Oxford University Press.
3. Heidegger, M. (1935). The origin of the work of art.