
iNVENTX Creative Exhibition

SUSTAINAISSANCE IN PRACTICE: Quiet Materials, Loud Meaning

Bloom Through Time

Farzura Azreen binti Abdul Saip
Email Address: farzura.saip@mmu.edu.my
Multimedia University Cyberjaya, Malaysia
ORCID iD: 0009-0007-2658-690X
(Corresponding Author)

Abstract

Bloom Through Time is a digital 3D sculpture of a glass female figure that morphs into an hourglass. Inside her chest is a glowing red rose, releasing droplets that form a pool of red liquid in the lower half. The glass reflects both strength and fragility, expressing how a woman may appear delicate while remaining resilient. The rose becomes the heart of the artwork, symbolizing identity and the inner beauty that blooms in silence. The pool of red liquid reflects the depth of emotion and experience gathered through life's passing moments. Created for the iNVENTX 2025 creative exhibition under the theme SUSTAINAISSANCE: Emotion, Expression, Identity, this digital artwork explores how a woman's emotion and identity evolve over time, shaped by memory, growth, and lived experience.

Keywords: Emotion; Identity; Expression; Femininity; Transformation; Time

Received: 26 June 2025, **Accepted:** 12 February 2026, **Published:** 30 June 2026

Artist Statement

Concept and Theme

When introduced to the theme of the iNVENTX 2025 creative exhibition, the intention was to create an artwork that reflects femininity, beauty and emotion. The early idea explored the possibility of morphing the human body with elements of nature to reflect the exhibition's theme. As the ideation developed, the hourglass form and glass material emerged as a more compelling metaphor.

The final concept features a glass female figure morphing into an hourglass. This form symbolizes how identity, emotion and expression can evolve and be sustained over time.

The hourglass silhouette follows the natural curves of a woman's body, while the glass material reflects both fragility and strength. The droplets from the glowing rose, along with the red pool below, represent not only the passage of time but also the emotional depth and lived experiences of a woman. The rose on her chest evokes a woman's identity and inner beauty – quiet, radiant and enduring.

Approach and Process

To bring the digital 3D sculpture to life, a combination of sculpting, modelling, texturing, simulation and lighting setup processes were used, involving several different software tools.

The process began with a free base mesh from the Turbosquid website, which was refined and detailed in Autodesk Mudbox by sculpting the facial features, body shape, and muscle definition. The mesh was then retopologized in Autodesk Maya to rebuild the structure with clean topology suitable for animation.

The hourglass body shape, hair, rose, droplet, and platform were modeled in Maya using image references for accuracy. Mixamo was used for quick rigging, followed by manual paint weight adjustments in Maya. Reference images were also used as a guide to create a subtle pose yet expressive gesture for the female figure.

Texturing was done in Adobe Substance 3D Painter, experimenting with frosted and clear glass materials, and adjusting translucency, roughness, and colour values to create the desired emotional tone. Droplets and ripple effects were simulated in Maya using the Bifrost system, with several tests carried out to refine the liquid's movement.

Lighting was set in warm tones to evoke emotion, and simple camera animations were added to highlight key details like the glowing rose, droplets and ripples on the liquid. The final render was done using Arnold, with post-processing effects such as bloom to enhance its cinematic feel.

Meaning and Impact

This artwork invites viewers to consider how time shapes emotion, expression, and identity through visual metaphor, using the female form as a symbolic structure for lived experience. The glass female figure morphing into an hourglass reveal both fragility and strength, while the glowing rose reflects a woman's identity and inner beauty. The pool of red liquid serves as a metaphor for emotional depth, representing the endurance and personal journey experienced by a woman – through passion, grief, growth and transformation.

The goal is to invite viewers to reflect on a woman's journey, how identity can evolve and still be sustained, how emotions can change, and how women continue to grow and define themselves as time moves forward.

Materials and Techniques

The artwork was created using base mesh from Turbosquid, Autodesk Mudbox, Autodesk Maya, Mixamo and Adobe Substance 3D Painter. Mudbox was used to sculpt the female figure, refining facial details and anatomical features to express the emotional qualities of the female figure. Figure 1 shows the sculpted model in Mudbox during this stage of the process.



Figure 1. Sculpted Female Figure in Autodesk Mudbox

In Maya, the model was retopologised and further developed into an hourglass shape. Additional elements such as the rose, hair, droplets, liquid pool, and platform were also modelled.

Mixamo was used for the initial rigging, followed by manual paint weight adjustments in Maya. Maya was also used for liquid simulation, camera and lighting setup, and final rendering. Figure 2 shows the complete 3D model with the camera and lighting setup in Maya, while Figure 3 shows an early test of the water simulation using Bifrost.

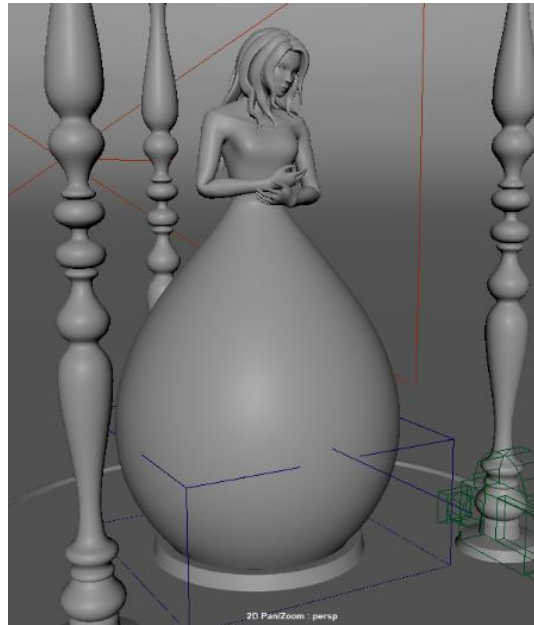


Figure 2. Final 3D Model setup in Autodesk Maya

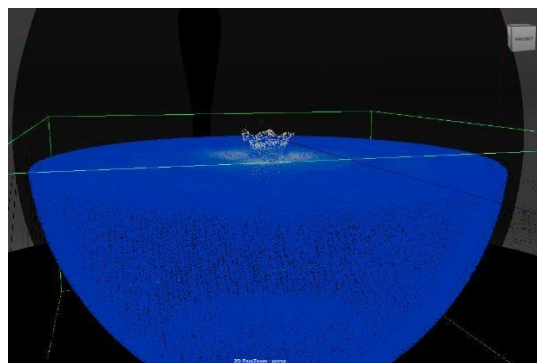


Figure 3. Water Simulation Test Using Bifrost in Autodesk Maya

Textures were created in Adobe Substance 3D Painter. The glass body was textured using a mix of clear and frosted finishes, symbolizing both fragility and strength. Emission effects were added to the rose and liquid to give them a soft glow, representing emotional intensity. Figure 4 shows the texturing process in Substance 3D Painter, where various material properties were tested to achieve the desired look.



Figure 4. Texturing process in Adobe Substance 3D Painter

Post-processing effects such as bloom were applied in Maya to enhance the cinematic feel, as seen in the final render shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Final Rendered image in Autodesk Maya with Lighting and Post-Processing Effects

These tools and techniques were carefully selected and experimented with to support the overall concept and visual storytelling of the artwork.

Artistic and Design Influences

The use of hourglass and flower symbolism has long existed in art history to reflect on life and the passage of time. These symbols have traditionally represented life's fragility and the certainty of change.

This artwork is also influenced by that tradition but interprets it from a more personal perspective, focusing on the emotional endurance, beauty, strength and fragility. As Debbie Walter notes in her study, contemporary visual art often employs these symbols to reflect on time, beauty, and the nature of life.

Conclusion

This artwork invites viewers to reflect on how a woman's personal identity, beauty, growth and emotion can be transformed and sustained, rather than lost. This concept may be extended into interactive or mixed-reality formats, allowing audiences to engage more directly with themes of memory, embodiment, and emotional transformation. The references listed in the writing provide contextual grounding for the symbolic use of time, embodiment, and visual metaphor within contemporary art practice.

References

- [1] Kresser, K. (2022, January 5). Hourglass: For the New Year. Magis Center. <https://www.magiscenter.com/blog/hourglass-for-the-new-year>
- [2] Dieleman, H., Cozzolino, F., & Bationo, A. (2017). The aesthetic experience of time, in between the hourglass and the self. *Transdisciplinary Journal of Engineering & Science*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.22545/2017/00095>
- [3] Walter, D. (2019). Memento Mori: A positive and contemporary reflection through visual art on a life spent well. *IAFOR Journal of Arts & Humanities*, 6(2), 107–120. <https://doi.org/10.22492.ijah.6.2.10>

Acknowledgment

A heartfelt thanks to Multimedia University for organising and providing the opportunity to participate in this creative exhibition. Special appreciation goes to my colleagues, whose support and guidance helped me explore the expressive potential of materials and symbolism. Finally, gratitude is extended to the developers of Autodesk and Adobe software, whose tools made the technical realisation of this concept possible.

Funding Information

The artist did not receive any funding from external parties for the creation or publication of this artwork.

Authors' Bio

Farzura Azreen (born February 15, 1993, Sabah, Malaysia) has been an academician for over seven years. She holds a bachelor's degree in Virtual Reality from Multimedia University and has contributed to numerous projects, primarily in 3D modelling and motion capture.