

The Grotesque and Carnivorous Beauty of *Hannibal* Fanart

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Abstract

Works collected in the *Printed in Blood: Hannibal Artbook* demonstrate how fan artists extend the show's symbolic language, exploring its psychological depth and affective resonance through their own creative practices. Through motifs such as food and consumption, as well as antlers and floral imagery, the crime-thriller television series *Hannibal* (2013–2015) aestheticizes violence. In doing so, it transforms acts of violence into moments of perverse beauty, blurring boundaries between creation and destruction, predator and prey, horror and beauty. These visual strategies not only draw from historical traditions such as *vanitas* still lifes and the grotesque but also invite audiences to engage with violence as spectacle and metaphor, rather than simply narrative shock. Consequently, the artistic sensibility of *Hannibal* has generated a vibrant body of fan-created artworks that reinterpret its motifs across media imagery through watercolors, digital collages, and poster-like composition. These artists engage in a dialogue with art history—referencing floral symbolism, religious iconography, and still-life traditions—while simultaneously transforming them through a contemporary, often queer lens. This paper argues that *Hannibal* fan art is not derivative ephemera, but a legitimate form of artistic production that expands the boundaries of visual culture. Through an analysis of

selected works, this thesis will establish how fan artists use aesthetic reinterpretation as a form of emotional exploration, complicating ideas of mortality, intimacy, and metamorphosis. In doing so, this study contributes to art historical scholarship by positioning fandom as a site where canonical motifs are reimagined, and where popular culture intersects with fine art. Ultimately, *Hannibal* fan art exemplifies how television can function as both inspiration and collaborator in the creation of new artistic traditions.

Introduction

Adapted from the *Red Dragon* crime terror novel by writer Thomas Harris, the series *Hannibal* follows the intricate relationship between FBI special investigator Will Graham and Dr. Hannibal Lecter, a psychiatrist who leads a double life as a cannibalistic serial killer.^{1 2} Striking cinematography, hypnotic storytelling, and intricate symbolism elevate the show beyond the standard crime procedural and transform the violent, macabre, and grotesque into an uncanny, almost sacred experience. Motifs such as food and consumption, deer antlers, floral imagery, and blood used as an art medium help blur the line between creation and destruction. Along with the concept of the cat and mouse game, the motifs help to provide artistic sensibility that has resonated deeply with fans. A rich body of fan art that engages with the show's visual language and themes reinterprets the series' aesthetic through digital and traditional mediums, exploring its psychological depth and processing its symbolic complexity.

Through an analysis of selected pieces from the *Printed in Blood Hannibal: Artbook*, this thesis explores how fans respond to the show's themes through their own artistic lens, and how the aesthetics in *Hannibal* fanart extend the show's visual language through other media.³ By examining themes such as nature, the romanticization of death, and the transformation of the human form, this study will highlight how *Hannibal* fanart serves simultaneously as a means of artistic expression and emotional exploration. Drawing from historical art traditions, such as *vanitas* paintings, botanical symbolism, and Dutch Golden age style of still-lives, these fan-created works engage with the show's central themes which include transformation, mortality, intimacy, and the duality of beauty and violence.

The research contributes to the study of the evolving role of fandom as a site of legitimate artistic production and critical engagement. I will position fan-created works as a continuation and reinvention of long-standing artistic dialogues around death, beauty, and the human psyche. Rather than dismissing fan art as derivative or secondary, this

¹ *Hannibal* in italics is referring to the series, and *Hannibal* not in italics refers to the actual character.

² *Hannibal*, created by Bryan Fuller, written by Bryan Fuller, featuring Mads Mikkelsen and Hugh Dancy, aired April 4, 2013 to August 29, 2015, NBC.

³ *Hannibal: Artbook*. Los Angeles, California: Printed in Blood, 2022.

paper asserts its place within the continuum of visual art and culture, where contemporary creators echo, subvert, and expand canonical motifs in ways that reflect both personal and collective interpretations of a modern mythos. Moreover, it demonstrates how television as a visual medium can inspire creative responses that blur boundaries between popular culture and fine art. The *Hannibal* fandom, with its strong emphasis on aesthetics, interiority, and affective resonance, provides a rich case study in how contemporary media can generate immersive symbolic worlds that invite reinterpretation and participation. These works not only extend the life and meaning of the source material but also contribute to broader conversations in art history about audience reception, authorship, and the role of emotion and embodiment in artistic practice. Ultimately, this paper argues for the critical recognition of fan art not merely as cultural ephemera, but as a meaningful and evolving form of artistic production—one that offers valuable insights into how visual storytelling is interpreted, reimagined, and emotionally processed in the digital age.

The Television Series

Hannibal (2013–2015) is a modern psychological horror-thriller television series taking place primarily in Baltimore developed by Bryan Fuller, based on characters from the novel *Red Dragon* (1981), by Thomas Harris. The narrative unfolds as a darkly intimate dance between Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Mads Mikkelsen), a man of refinement and hidden monstrosity, and Will Graham (Hugh Dancy), the empathic investigator who both fears and is irresistibly drawn to him. Their connection, at once tender and perilous, transforms the boundaries between love, manipulation, and ruin. Graham, gifted with an uncanny ability to empathize with killers, is recruited by the FBI to profile violent criminals and potentially apprehend them before they strike again. However, his unique talent comes at a cost—Will's deep immersion into the minds of murderers leaves him mentally and emotionally vulnerable. To help him manage the psychological toll, he is assigned to work with Dr. Hannibal Lecter, an esteemed psychiatrist with refined tastes and a keen understanding of human nature. Unbeknownst to the FBI, Lecter is not only manipulating their investigations but also using his position to push Will closer to the edge of sanity. As their relationship evolves, a dangerous bond forms between them, blurring the line between hunter and hunted, patient and predator. With its visually striking cinematography, surreal horror elements, and a narrative rich in symbolism, *Hannibal* is a contemporary drama that delves into themes of identity, obsession, and the seductive nature of evil.

The series *Hannibal* resonates deeply with its fans for several reasons, including how it blends psychological depth, artistic storytelling, and a unique exploration of morality and obsession. At the heart of the show is the intense, almost symbiotic relationship between Graham and Lecter. Their dynamic transcends the typical hero-villain

trope, evolving into a psychological and emotional chess match filled with manipulation, mutual understanding, and a dark form of love. Fans are drawn to the ambiguity of their bond, as Will is simultaneously repulsed by and drawn to Hannibal, while Hannibal sees Will as his intellectual equal and potential kindred spirit. In the episode “Dolce,” Will confesses that Hannibal and he “have begun to blur” and they are “conjoined.” Will continues to ask if either can survive separation, while Hannibal says, “Freeing yourself from me and me freeing myself from you, they're the same.”⁴ Subsequently, in “The Number of the Beast is 666,” Will has a conversation with Hannibal’s former psychiatrist, Dr. Bedelia Du Maurier (Gillian Anderson), and asks, “Is Hannibal in love with me?” in which Dr. Du Maurier replies, “Could he daily feel a stab of hunger for you and find nourishment at the very sight of you? Yes. But do you...ache for him?”⁵ These crucial moments in the show are emblematic of Will and Hannibal’s relationship as the series frames their love as a force which consumes them as much as it binds them together.

The Show’s Motifs

The show blends its psychological horror with gothic aesthetics and artistic depictions of violence and death. Its use of symbolism, particularly in food and art, reflects Hannibal's refined yet monstrous nature. With these features, *Hannibal* becomes a kind of optical exhibit with every scene meticulously composed and each murder *tableau* echoing classical and contemporary art.

Famous classic Italian art such as Botticelli’s *Primavera* (Fig. 1) along with more contemporary pieces from artists like Damien Hirst are directly referenced in *Hannibal*. Chronologically, one of Hannibal’s first murder *tableaux* involves corpses posed to mimic Zephyrus and Flora from *Primavera*, their bodies arranged in an uncanny imitation of the painting. (Fig. 2) This *tableau* reimagines *Primavera*’s celebration of rebirth and fertility as an image of grotesque regeneration. The lush foliage that once symbolized love and the renewal of spring now sprouts from death, transforming beauty into decay. In doing so, *Hannibal* subverts the moral harmony of Renaissance art, turning Botticelli’s allegory into a macabre meditation on the fragility of life and the seductive pull of mortality. Another *tableau* references Damien Hirst’s *Mother and Child (Divided)* (Fig. 3), with the female FBI investigator Beverly Katz (Hettienne Park) cut into a dissected cross section. (Fig. 4) This direct visual quotation of Hirst’s installation transforms the gallery space of conceptual art into a site of horror. In his piece, Hirst presents the bisected bodies of a cow and her calf in glass vitrines, inviting viewers to walk between them as though traversing the space

⁴ Don Mancini, Bryan Fuller, and Steve Lightfoot, “Dolce,” episode, *Hannibal* (NBC, July 9, 2015).

⁵ Jeff Vlaming et al., “The Number of the Beast Is 666,” episode, *Hannibal* (NBC, August 22, 2015).

between life and death. The piece confronts the viewer with mortality through clinical detachment—death is made visible, dissected, and preserved, both revolting and sacred. *Hannibal* recontextualizes this aesthetic into narrative form: Beverly’s dissected body, displayed in laboratory-like panels, becomes an uncanny echo of Hirst’s cold vitrines. The murder transforms the act of analysis itself—so central to the forensic and scientific gaze—into an act of violation and spectacle. These scenes function as both homage and inversion—honoring to balance the artist's composition while exposing the horror that underlies aesthetic perfection.

In bridging these art historical references, *Hannibal* also draws deeply from the moral and symbolic framework of *vanitas* painting, a tradition that visually meditates on mortality and the transience of earthly pleasures. *Vanitas* art is closely related to *memento mori* still-lives, which are artworks that remind the viewer of the shortness and fragility of life and include symbols such as skulls and extinguished candles. (Fig. 6) Moreover, *vanitas* still-lives also include other symbols such as musical instruments, wine and books to remind us explicitly of vanity (in the sense of worthlessness or gratification) of worldly pleasures and goods.⁶ *Hannibal* appropriates this tradition through sumptuous yet unsettling displays—lavish meals of human flesh or bodies staged as baroque compositions—each balancing beauty with a haunting reminder of mortality. A striking example is in the episode entitled “Futamono,” a murder *tableau* displays a man hanging on a blooming cherry blossom tree with his organs removed and replaced by flowers.⁷ (Fig. 5) This tableau from the episode “*Futamono*” exemplifies *Hannibal*’s transformation of the *vanitas* tradition into a contemporary meditation on beauty, death, and decay. The image depicts a man suspended against a blooming cherry blossom tree, his torso opened to reveal a cavity filled with vibrant flowers. Flowers and similar natural motifs are woven throughout the show, often appearing in crime scenes where the grotesque and the elegant merge. Furthermore, botanical symbolism has its origin in the literature of antiquity, where plants are often used in metaphors for virtue and vice.⁸ The use of flowers in *Hannibal* operates on a similar level, where their beauty and delicacy often become distorted, offering a stark commentary on the fragility of life and the intertwining of beauty with violence. The composition fuses the sacred and the grotesque: the body assumes a cruciform posture reminiscent of religious martyrdom, while the surrounding blossoms and inserted bouquet create a striking visual contrast between vitality and lifelessness. Dutch *vanitas* paintings used specific visual emblems to remind the viewer of death by not

⁶ Tate, “Vanitas – Art Term | Tate,” Tate, 2017, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/v/vanitas>.

⁷ Bryan Fuller, “Futamono,” episode, *Hannibal* (NBC, April 4, 2014).

⁸ Jennifer Meagher, “Botanical Imagery in European Painting - the Metropolitan Museum of Art.” Metmuseum.org, August 2007. <https://www.metmuseum.org/essays/botanical-imagery-in-european-painting>.

actually having death be present in the painting and to also seduce the eyes of the spectator with melancholic colors and rich textures. *Hannibal* seduces viewers with visual excess but also forces them to confront the direct horror of death and decay in the forefront. In this way, *Hannibal* reimagines the *vanitas* for a cinematic medium: the human body itself becomes the canvas, the site where the tension between creation and destruction is made literal. Through this *tableau*, the series blurs boundaries between art and atrocity, reminding viewers that aesthetic pleasure and moral horror often coexist within the same frame.

While *Hannibal*'s *vanitas* imagery lures viewers through beauty and symbolism, the series deepens this aesthetic through its embrace of the grotesque, which transforms that beauty into something unstable, mutable, and transgressive. The grotesque is much more difficult to define, in that its definition is ever evolving. Emerging in Renaissance ornamentation and later theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), the grotesque disturbs by showing the body as mutable and unfinished. The grotesque represents a state of change, breaking what we know and merging it with the unknown. According to scholar Frances S. Connelly, the constant visual attribute we have of the grotesque is that of flux.⁹ Whether aberrant, metamorphic, or combinatory, grotesques are all in a transitional, in-between state of being.¹⁰ *Hannibal* employs this aesthetic in its murder tableaux and dream imagery. In the episode "Primavera," Will finds a murder *tableau* of the remains of a man skinned and bent into the shape of a human heart while also shoved through three swords.¹¹ (Fig. 7) Will's dialogue in the scene describes it as "a topiary...A valentine written on a broken man... He [Hannibal] left us his broken heart." This haunting image embodies the grotesque's essence—transformation through destruction. The body, disassembled and reshaped, is both a gruesomely macabre message to Will while also being a romantic confession that shows the horrific beauty of their inseparable relationship. These concepts unsettle because they reveal the instability of identity and the porous boundary between predator and prey. According to Bakhtin, if the positive and negative poles of becoming (death-birth) are torn apart and opposed to each other in various diffuse images, they lose their direct relation to the whole and are deprived of their ambivalence.¹² This idea means that life and death, creation and destruction, are not opposing forces but part of a

⁹ Frances S Connelly, *The Grotesque in Western Art and Culture : The Image at Play* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014). 5.

¹⁰ See: Geoffrey Harpham, "The Grotesque: First Principles," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 34, no. 4 (1976): 461, <https://doi.org/10.2307/430580>. and Justin D Edwards and Rune Graulund, *Grotesque* (London: Routledge, 2013). for similar theories and thoughts.

¹¹ Vlaming, Jeff, and Bryan Fuller. "Primavera." Episode. *Hannibal* 3, no. 2. NBC, June 11, 2015.

¹² Michail Michajlovič Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), https://monoskop.org/images/7/70/Bakhtin_Mikhail_Rabelais_and_His_World_1984.pdf. 150.

continuous cycle of transformation—a cycle that the series visualizes with uncanny elegance. The grotesque in *Hannibal* is most powerfully expressed through its staging of the body as a site of evolution, never fixed, always in the process of becoming something other. This insistence on incompleteness, on bodies as unstable and permeable, speaks to Bakhtin's notion of the grotesque body—one defined not by closed, classical wholeness, but by orifices, wounds, growths, and openings that connect it to the world.

The carnivalesque humor of the grotesque, also theorized by Bakhtin, involves the temporary inversion of order, where high and low, sacred and profane collapse into ritualized festivity and excess. The root of “carnival,” is *carne*, alluding not only to the eating of meat, but more broadly to the appetites of the flesh.¹³ Within *Hannibal*, this inversion is enacted through its grotesquely elegant feasts, where acts of murder and cannibalism are reframed as banquets of sophistication. Hannibal's dinner parties stage the carnivalesque collapse of moral categories: the sacred ritual of dining becomes entwined with the profane consumption of human flesh, guests unwittingly celebrating their own proximity to death. In these moments, boundaries between life and death, refinement and savagery, beauty and horror dissolve in scenes of ritualized excess. At the end of the episode “Sorbet,” Hannibal hosts a dinner party with his elite friends while unbeknownst to them, feeding them human flesh.¹⁴ As they applaud him as he stands over his accomplished cooking and evil manipulation, he says with a sly smile before toasting his guests with wine, “Before we begin you must all be warned, nothing here is vegetarian. *Bon Appetit.*”¹⁵ Like the medieval carnival that mocked hierarchies by placing the fool on the throne, *Hannibal* upends cultural distinctions by transforming crime into art, corpses into sculpture, and cannibalism into haute cuisine. Through this lens, the series embodies the grotesque and carnivalesque operation of destabilizing power, using excess and parody to reveal the fragility of social and moral order.

The visual language of *Hannibal* thus operates on multiple levels, blending psychological horror with the sensibilities of fine art. There are many distinct cinematic techniques in the series including the layering of Will and Hannibal's image over one another with a psychedelic sequence in which Will and Hannibal's likenesses begin to blur and merge into each other.¹⁶ Every shot is meticulously crafted, from the surreal murder *tableaux* to the grotesquely beautiful food presentations that play into Hannibal's

¹³ Connelly, *The Grotesque in Western Art and Culture : The Image at Play*, 88. Carnival Rituals were and are often followed by Lent and offered the masses a kind of respite from everyday life and its social decorum.

¹⁴ Jesse Alexander and Bryan Fuller, “Sorbet ,” episode, *Hannibal* (NBC, May 9, 2013).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Jaquelin Elliott, “This Is My Becoming: Transformation, Hybridity, and the Monstrous in NBC's *Hannibal*,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 87, no. 1 (March 2018): 249–65, <https://doi.org/10.3138/utq.87.1.249>.

sophisticated palate.¹⁷ The idea of cannibalism, or more broadly, the depiction and symbolism of meat and consumption, expands beyond mere horror; it becomes a metaphor for power, control, and transformation. The act of consumption in *Hannibal* extends beyond the literal, serving as a metaphor for power, intimacy, and the transference of identity. Hannibal's elaborate meals, often prepared from parts of his victims, serve as both an artistic expression and a chilling display of dominance. The series uses food not only as a tool for horror but also as a means of exploring identity—who is consumed, who does the consuming, and how those roles shift over time. This fusion of horror and desire evokes historical still-life paintings from artists such as Pieter Aertsen, Claude Monet, and Francisco Goya, where sumptuous banquets serve as both feasts for the eyes and *memento mori*—reminders of mortality and excess.¹⁸ An example from the show that portrays a similar style to these portraits are the promo images of the characters, particularly the one of the main cast and the solo image of Hannibal. (Fig. 8) and (Fig. 9) Both of these photos evoke the juxtaposed beauty and decay to remind viewers of the fleeting nature of life and the vanity of earthly pleasures. In the first image, Hannibal poses beside a skull—a direct *memento mori* symbol—while surrounded by delicate flowers, ornate food items, and a silver chalice. This composition recalls the classic arrangement of *vanitas* paintings, where sumptuous objects such as fruits, books, and goblets were placed alongside skulls, extinguished candles, or wilting blooms. The second promotional image, featuring the main cast gathered around an opulent feast, expands this *vanitas tableau* into a collective meditation on excess and consumption. The table overflows with richly colored foods—lobsters, pomegranates, fruits, and flowers—arranged in near-baroque abundance. Yet beneath this elegance lies unease: the meal alludes to Hannibal's cannibalism, turning the feast into a dark parody of communion. The setting's deep blues and crimson accents suggest both luxury and morbidity, enveloping the scene in an atmosphere of suspended decay. The guests, unaware of the grotesque irony of their meal, become living participants in a *vanitas* composition—figures trapped in a moment of sensual pleasure that foreshadows their doom.

Metamorphosis also appears in the show's many surreal dream sequences. From the first episode onward, murder victims are seen gored onto antlers, transforming victims into eerie, almost ritualistic *tableaux*. Most notably, they symbolize Hannibal's psychological grip on Will, manifesting in his hallucinations as he struggles against his growing connection to Lecter. This contrasts with the concept of how deer antlers have

¹⁷ Every crime scene that Will investigates includes a corpse horribly mangled into a macabre art piece. They are known colloquially in the fandom as “murder *tableaux*” as each have unique names and are uniquely distinctive from one another. Examples include Human Cello (S1, Ep 8), Eye of God (S2, Ep 2), Primavera (S3 Ep 2), etc.

¹⁸ See: Aertsen's *A Meat Stall with the Holy Family Giving Alms* (1551), Goya's *A Butcher's Counter* (c.1808-12) and Monet's *Still Life with Meat* (1862-63).

been portrayed throughout art. The deer is often associated as a constant companion of the divine and virtuous hunter Artemis in Greek art, while in the Middle Ages, it was considered a symbol of purity due to its natural ability to be alert and timid at all times. In later centuries, it became a symbol of pride, dignity, and virtue as a trophy animal. In contemporary works, the deer represents ideas of nobility and vulnerability with its majestic form often associated with both grace and sacrifice.¹⁹

The final motif captivating viewers in the series *Hannibal* is the use of blood as a medium to create art. In *Hannibal*, blood is not merely a sign of violence but an artistic medium. Crime scenes are arranged with a meticulousness that suggests reverence, transforming murder into a perverse act of creation. In “Mizumono,” the bloody fight between the main characters climaxes as Hannibal walks away from the scene into the rain, washing away his doings while Will and the rest of the characters are left to bleed out into a symbolic ocean of blood as he envisions the stag from his nightmares bleeding out and dying in front of him.²⁰ This motif underscores Lecter’s view of himself as both destroyer and creator, crafting suffering into something almost transcendent. The concept of violence as an artistic statement is reflected in the show’s use of highly stylized murder *tableaux*, where the bodies become part of haunting, grotesquely elegant installations. In works of art, blood has many different connotations, but the main source of importance is the fact that every living human has blood. Blood is both a source of life and a cause of death, circulating within the body of a living being or emanating from a corpse. Blood also has religious symbology in that it can both bring salvation or fertility, just as it can bring peril or death.²¹

Hannibal’s atmosphere and distinct cinematography blend psychological horror with the aesthetic sensibilities of fine art through its crime and horror centric themes. Through the motifs of meat and consumption, antlers and animalistic transformation, floral and natural imagery, and blood used as art, the series transforms violence into a surreal, almost sacred experience, aligning itself with artistic traditions that explore the tension between beauty and brutality. Thus, *Hannibal* does not merely depict violence; it aestheticizes it, turning each moment into a haunting meditation on the nature of humanity itself. Fans of *Hannibal* note the series’ motifs and aesthetic transformations while also expounding upon the show’s visuals through their own artistic responses and pieces.

¹⁹ Anna Kuchma, “Deer as a Symbol in Art: Not Only a Christmas Decoration.” Arhive, January 12, 2018. https://arthive.com/encyclopedia/3123~Deer_as_a_symbol_in_art_not_only_a_christmas_decoration.

²⁰ Bryan Fuller and Steven Lightfoot, “Mizumono,” episode, *Hannibal* (NBC, May 23, 2014).

²¹ Michel Pastoureau, and Jody Gladding, “Fire and Blood.” In *Red: The History of a Color*, 22–29. Princeton University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.3919389.5>.

Fan Art

The concept of fan art, or more specifically the definition of being a fan artist, is to take a piece of media (movie, TV show, cartoon, etc.) as a source of inspiration and then create your own body of work based upon this material.²² It is a form of artistic expression that allows fans to engage with an idea and the media they love, offering their interpretations, reimaginings, or expansions of established characters, settings, and themes. Fan art can take many forms, including traditional media such as watercolor, sculptures, and canvas paintings as well as contemporary media such as digital art. Digital art, once called computer art or new media art, refers to art made using software, computers, or other electronic devices. Anything produced or made on digital media, such as animations, photographs, illustrations, videos, digital paintings, and such, can be classified as digital art.²³ Sources and websites that artists can use to make digital art include Procreate, Photoshop, Krita, and Blender among others.²⁴

Beyond simply consuming the series, *Hannibal* fans engage deeply with its themes, aesthetics, and characters by creating an expansive array of fan art and digital media. Social media has also been important to the response and cataloging of *Hannibal* fan art, enabling artists to form vibrant online communities where interpretations, stylistic choices, and thematic analyses are discussed and shared. Platforms such as Tumblr, Instagram, Twitter (X), and DeviantArt have functioned as digital galleries and discourse spaces, allowing artists to build upon each other's visual ideas and interpretations. In these spaces, the artistry of *Hannibal* becomes collaborative, collective, and constantly evolving. The communal nature of fan art reflects how audiences internalize, process, and reimagine the media they consume—not as passive viewers but as co-creators. This creative response underscores the show's lasting impact and its ability to inspire artistic interpretation across different media. In order to understand the breadth and complexity of this practice, this paper will analyze five distinctive fan-created pieces from *Hannibal: Artbook*.

²² Magnus Schodroski, "The World of Fan-Art: Fan Art as a Contemporary Art Form," Usnh.edu (Pressbooks, 2019), <https://pressbooks.usnh.edu/openingcontemporaryart/chapter/the-world-of-fan-art-how-fan-art-is-its-own-contemporary-art-form/>.

²³ Eden Gallery, "Digital Art: What Is Digital Art Definition?" Eden Gallery, September 9, 2021. <https://www.eden-gallery.com/news/what-is-digital-art>.

²⁴ See these links for more information: <https://procreate.com/>, <https://www.adobe.com/products/photoshop.html>, <https://krita.org/en/>, <https://www.blender.org/>.

Artist Lin

The Tokyo-based Chinese artist known as Lin or colloquially known as Artist Lin on Instagram contributes a work that reimagines and exemplifies the themes transformation and connection.²⁵ The piece, titled *Feast*, (Fig. 10) is a double watercolor portrait of our lead men entangled by vines and flowers. The painting is rich in symbolism, utilizing soft yet striking elements to convey psychological depth and tension. Both men are positioned facing each other closely, their gazes slightly averted yet still locked in an unspoken connection. The slight divergence in their gazes creates a sense of tension, as if they are both deeply linked yet struggling with unspoken emotions. The floral elements that weave between them serve as both a barrier and a tether, binding them together even as they obscure parts of their forms. The flowers bloom in deep reds and soft pinks, their delicate petals juxtaposed against the subtle wounds on the men's faces. Blood and blossoms intertwine, hinting at the beauty and brutality of their relationship. The vines, creeping and invasive, suggest something organic yet suffocating, an inescapable force growing between them, nourished by both passion and destruction.

Rendered in delicate, flowing watercolors, the painting captures the fluidity of emotion, such as love, fear, and obsession, all bleeding together as naturally as the pigments on paper. The background, a deep, almost void-like darkness, isolates them, drawing the eye to the tension between their figures. The softness of the medium enhances the ethereal, dreamlike quality of the composition, as if this moment exists outside of time, a fleeting yet eternal struggle between longing and restraint. The contrast between their pale, vulnerable skin and the dark, blooming flora suggests a duality between life and death, love and danger. The background isolates them in their own world, making the scene feel suspended in time, an intimate yet haunting moment frozen in watercolor. The dreamlike quality of the painting reflects the show's own visual language, where reality and hallucination often blur. In *Hannibal*, violence is stylized, often presented as art itself—murder scenes transformed into grotesque masterpieces. Lin's *Feast* echoes this aesthetic, presenting Will and Hannibal as both subjects and creators of a shared psychological tableau. Their wounds are subtle but deliberate, not disfiguring, but almost ornamental, suggesting that pain, in their world, is intrinsic to intimacy. The blood staining their skin becomes indistinguishable from the crimson petals around them, a visual metaphor for the way love and violence coalesce in their relationship.

From an art historical perspective, the image and symbolism of the flower have related to the notion that both life and beauty are short-lived. In paintings similar to this genre, which gained popularity around the seventeenth century, splendid bouquets of

²⁵ See: @artist_lin at <https://www.instagram.com/>.

flowers appear alongside others that are beginning to wilt.²⁶ This symbolic contrast between vitality and decay serves as a meditation on the impermanence of life, a theme echoed in *Feast* through its interplay of lush blossoms and the lingering presence of wounds. The floral symbols in the artwork provide insight into the transience of beauty found in the piece, with red lilies, poppies, and peonies being the main flora on display. Lilies have deep meaning that includes the concept of purity in Christianity, as there are many passages in the Old Testament where the lily is attributed to qualities of fertility, beauty, and spiritual flowering.²⁷ Red poppies are also associated with Christian iconography, with the image of their red color becoming a symbol for the Passion of Christ.²⁸ Peonies are more well-known in Asian art and symbolize wealth, prosperity, and honor. The flowers, while vibrant, suggest an inevitable withering, just as the men's connection—whether seen as love, obsession, or rivalry—teeters between its peak and its decline. This *vanitas*-like quality, with their pallid, almost ghostly skin against the deep background, suggests figures caught in a moment that is both intimate and tragic. The blood, wilted flowers, and paleness of their skin, alludes to the futility of earthly possessions in the face of inevitable death.²⁹

Likewise, the grotesque emerges in *Feast* through the intermingling of the beautiful and the horrific, particularly in the entwined imagery of wounds, blood, and blossoms. The flowers, lush and vibrantly painted, contrast against the men's pale, scarred bodies, collapsing boundaries between flesh and flora, vitality and decay. This hybridity recalls the grotesque tradition where bodies are never stable but always transforming—bleeding into other forms, mutating, dissolving. In this work, the blood appears ornamental, almost indistinguishable from the petals, suggesting that pain and injury are woven seamlessly into beauty. The grotesque operates here not by shocking disfigurement, but through subtle dissonance: the intimacy of wounds rendered delicate, the merging of human fragility with floral abundance. It is precisely this tension between allure and unease that makes the painting grotesque, destabilizing the comfort of traditional portraiture.

At the same time, the grotesque can be traced in how the painting inverts conventions of the double portrait and the image of metamorphosis. Traditionally a format that celebrated familial honor, marriage, or dynastic continuity, here the form is reworked into something destabilizing and ambiguous. The figures' proximity suggests intimacy, but their averted gazes deny the harmony that such portraits conventionally celebrate. Instead, they are bound by vines and petals, as if caught in a carnival of excess where the

²⁶ Lucia Impelluso, Stephen Sartarelli, and Paul Getty, *Nature and Its Symbols* (Los Angeles The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 74.

²⁷ Impelluso, Sartarelli, and Getty, *Nature and Its Symbols*, 85.

²⁸ Ibid, 111.

²⁹ Ibid, 74.

natural world overtakes and entraps them. Flowers—normally symbols of delicacy and refinement—become unruly, exaggerated, invasive, parodying their expected roles. Blood and blossoms become interchangeable, as if the grotesque feast of violence and passion has spilled into the frame, overwhelming the decorum of portraiture. Bakhtin’s notion of the carnivalesque emphasizes the body in its most material, excessive, and transgressive states—eating, bleeding, desiring. *Feast* channels this by presenting Hannibal and Will not as distant archetypes of intellect or morality, but as vulnerable, wounded bodies caught in cycles of consumption and entanglement. The vines and flowers binding them recall carnival’s inversion of order: instead of rational distance or clarity, there is excess, overflow, and entrapment. In this way, Lin transforms a refined watercolor double portrait into a scene where beauty tips into grotesque exaggeration, and where intimacy is inseparable from violence.

Given the narrative of *Hannibal*, queer tensions also arise in fan art’s references to *vanitas* and iconographic traditions. The visual language employed by Artist Lin borrows from centuries-old artistic tropes—particularly the still-life and the double portrait—yet subverts them through the psychological and affective complexity of the Hannibal and Will dynamic. Rather than a meditation on material vanity or spiritual transcendence alone, the painting becomes a meditation on emotional entrapment, the eroticism of suffering, and the destructive beauty of obsessive connection. The double portrait format, historically used to capture marital or familial ties, is recontextualized here to depict a relationship that defies traditional categories.³⁰ Will and Hannibal are neither lovers in the explicit sense nor simple adversaries. Instead, they are suspended in a liminal state of mutual recognition and refusal, of desire and denial. Their partial nudity and close physical proximity echo the sensuality of classical portraiture while highlighting their vulnerability—both to each other and to the forces that bind them. The lack of clothing strips away external markers of identity, placing the focus entirely on their psychological and emotional states.

Prasanth

Instagram based artist Prasanth provides a work that extends *Hannibal*’s visual and psychological motifs into a darker meditation on the inner toil of Will’s mind.³¹ (Fig. 11) Although untitled, this piece was conceived as an “alternative poster design.”³² The

³⁰ See: Jan Van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, (1434). Piero della Francesca, *Portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino*, (c. 1473-1475).

³¹ See: @apertureanecdotes at <https://www.instagram.com/>.

³² The artist made an Instagram post about the piece with the following hashtags: #hannibalfanart, #alternatposter, #posterdesign, #poster

artwork presents a surreal blend of portraiture, symbolism, and psychological depth. The forefront of the vertical composition presents an outlook that blends realism with dreamlike imagery. The main focal points include two male figures, a stag, and an intricate floral arrangement, all seamlessly woven together in an exceedingly detailed manner. The lower half of the digital art piece features Will's face in a warm reddish hue, occupying the majority of the image. His expression is solemn and introspective, and his gaze is directed downward. Collaged diagonally in the upper section of Will's head is Hannibal's looming figure in grayscale. He is sharply dressed in a composed demeanor, cutting into a collaged piece of brain on a plate with a look of satisfaction. His monochrome tone contrasts with the rich color palette of the flowers blooming around him. Behind the grayscale figure, a profile of a black stag's bust with large antlers appears. The multi-pointed antlers are interwoven with what appears to be an eruption of flowers, mushrooms, and organic growth. And finally, the deer's antlers are shown to have blood dripping from them as the moon's silhouette outlines the deer in this cacophony of beauty and grotesque detail.

The grotesque in this artwork emerges most clearly in the interplay of beauty and horror, particularly in the fusion of organic and violent elements. The stag's antlers, dripping with blood yet adorned with delicate blossoms and mushrooms, embody the grotesque tradition of hybridization—where opposing forms collide, creating a spectacle that is simultaneously alluring and unsettling. This unsettling duality is echoed in Hannibal's poised act of dining on a human brain, a moment of horror disguised as refinement. Here, the grotesque aesthetic thrives on contradiction: the uncanny spectacle of Hannibal eating human flesh while maintaining bourgeois decorum captures the tension between civility and savagery.³³ The natural beauty of the flowers entwined with symbols of death, the human face conjoined with animal and vegetal imagery, and Hannibal's civility overlaying acts of brutality. In this sense, the grotesque destabilizes boundaries between life and death, predator and prey, beauty and abjection. At the same time, the artwork invokes the carnivalesque in its inversion of hierarchies and its theatrical layering of imagery. The brain-as-feast transforms a horrifying act of consumption into a kind of satirical banquet, echoing Bakhtinian ideas of the carnival where the body, its appetites, and its degradations take center stage. Within this framing, Hannibal's dignified grayscale figure presiding over the brain meal becomes a parody of aristocratic feasting, while Will—rendered in deep, fleshy tones—becomes both the stage and the offering. The flowers erupting around the figures, almost excessive in their vibrancy, push the composition

https://www.instagram.com/p/CmhVDn0jhLJ/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MXVkYnd6OWdvbGw4dA==.

³³ See: Peter Fingesten, "Delimitating the Concept of the Grotesque," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 42, no. 4 (1984): 419, <https://doi.org/10.2307/430215>. For a similar idea analyzed.

toward a sense of carnival abundance, where life and death, beauty and decay, intermingle in chaotic celebration.

The flowers in this artwork play a crucial symbolic and compositional role, adding layers of meaning to the piece. Their vibrant presence contrasts with the darker, more unsettling elements, creating a sense of psychological tension. The flowers are highly detailed, resembling real botanical species rather than abstract representations. Their intricate textures, soft petals, and rich colors suggest careful selection, each possibly carrying symbolic weight. The arrangement seems natural yet deliberate, cascading organically from the subject's mind, as if thoughts, emotions, or memories are blooming outward. The types of flowers analyzed in the arrangement include red roses and chrysanthemums, yellow pansies, blue forget-me-nots, and white Japanese Anemone flowers. According to The Metropolitan Museum of Art curator Jennifer Farrel, color can have a variety connotations and connections; for many modern and contemporary artists, color functions not as a symbol or representation of something else, but as a subject in itself.³⁴ Often associated with passion, love, or sacrifice, red in this case is likely associated with its darker contexts, symbolizing blood, loss, or obsession. The flowers themselves, particularly the rose, have funerary connotations and are associated with martyrdom in Christian traditions.³⁵ Yellow is often considered the brightest and most energizing of the warm colors, often associated with hope, happiness and cheerfulness.³⁶ The poppy flower, in general, is attributed to the gods of sleep or death, and over time has become generally associated with eternal sleep and death.³⁷ Blue is most often tied in with the feeling of sadness and melancholy and provides a cool counterbalance to the fiery red and yellow hues, suggesting depth of thought or memories. Forget-me-nots are flowers given as a token of remembrance, either to those who have been lost or to those who we love for them to remember your love. White is typically linked to purity, innocence, or virtue. Anemones have been associated with death since antiquity and are usually spread around burial sites.³⁸

At the core of this artwork is the notion of consuming someone or something. Throughout art history and in antiquity, meat has been understood as a sacred object that

³⁴ Jennifer Farrell, "Color and Form - the Metropolitan Museum of Art," Metmuseum.org, November 17, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/perspectives/color-drawings-and-prints>.

³⁵ Lucia Impelluso, Stephen Sartarelli, and Paul Getty, *Nature and Its Symbols* (Los Angeles The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 118.

³⁶ Cameron Chapman, "Color Theory for Designers, Part 1: The Meaning of Color," Smashing Magazine, May 20, 2021, <https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2010/01/color-theory-for-designers-part-1-the-meaning-of-color/>.

³⁷ Lucia Impelluso, Stephen Sartarelli, and Paul Getty, *Nature and Its Symbols* (Los Angeles The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 111.

³⁸ Impelluso, Sartarelli, and Getty, *Nature and Its Symbols*, 108.

was used for holy or divine purposes. From sacrificial rituals, the idea arose that butchery should observe codified religious rules, and that meat consumption should be strictly regulated.³⁹ This historical connection between consumption and ritual sacrifice adds another layer of complexity to Prasanth's piece, reinforcing the psychological and symbolic relationship between the two central figures, Will and Hannibal. In the context of Hannibal (both the character and the series), the act of consuming another person is not just literal cannibalism but also a metaphor for domination, transformation, and intimacy. Hannibal Lecter's calculated, almost reverent approach to preparing and consuming flesh mirrors ancient sacrificial rites, where the offering of an animal, or even a human, was meant to create a bridge between the divine and the mortal, the powerful and the powerless. The choice to depict Hannibal in grayscale enhances this ritualistic association. Stripped of color, he becomes a figure of detachment, almost otherworldly in his cold precision, much like a high priest overseeing a sacrifice. The brain on the plate, an unmistakable reference to both knowledge and consumption, cements his role as both an intellectual and a predator. His actions are not merely about sustenance; they are about control, refinement, and an almost religious devotion to his craft.

Meanwhile, Will's placement in the composition, with his face occupying the lower half of the piece in a warm, reddish hue, suggests that he is both subject and object in this dynamic. His downward gaze evokes submission, contemplation, or even a subconscious resignation to the process of being "consumed." The stag, a recurring motif throughout the Hannibal series, serves as a liminal figure between hunter and hunted, its bloodied antlers suggesting both sacrifice and violent transformation. The flowers and mushrooms interwoven with the antlers reinforce this theme—organic growth emerging from decay, beauty from destruction, much like the way Hannibal seeks to mold Will into his own image. The stark contrast in color palettes between Will and Hannibal creates a split visual identity, reinforcing the duality of their relationship: one grounded in emotion, vulnerability, and internal struggle; the other marked by calculated detachment, ritual, and control. The spatial relationship of the two figures—Hannibal's contrast and ascension from Will's head—further supports the reading of Hannibal as both invader and catalyst, a force that reshapes Will's identity from within. Prasanth's composition, in its carefully collaged layers, does not merely present a portrait of two characters—it visualizes their entanglement. Prasanth's artwork extends *Hannibal's* visual language into the realm of digital art by reframing its themes of consumption, transformation, and intimacy through a distinctly painterly sensibility. It demonstrates how fan art functions as co-creation—an interpretive continuation of the show's aesthetic rather than mere imitation. By merging the grotesque with the *vanitas* tradition, Prasanth transforms *Hannibal's* cinematic

³⁹ Silvia Malaguzzi and Brian Phillips, *Food and Feasting in Art* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008), 132.

violence into an allegory of inner turmoil and evolution. The piece stands as a testament to how fan artists reimagine the source material's emotional and symbolic depth, expanding its narrative and aesthetic resonance across new media.

TheSeaVoices

TheSeaVoices on Instagram is the artist of the final two pieces, which visually examine the enigmatic complexities and the haunting consciousness of Hannibal and Will's psyches.⁴⁰ These two digital portraits portray Hannibal and Will in a surrealist nature, utilizing elements of double exposure, collage, and dreamlike imagery to convey complex psychological states. The artworks visually externalize their inner turmoil, intellectual depth, and the intricate bond between them; with Hannibal's rooted in manipulation, understanding, and an almost mythological sense of destiny while the other portrays the precariousness of Will's fragmented psyche and his struggle to navigate the turmoil of Hannibal's influence.

In the portrait of Hannibal (Fig. 12), a forest grows from his head, populated with a fallen body appearing to be Will, and a crimson version of Mischa, Hannibal's deceased younger sister. Mischa was the first person Hannibal ate, while also being the only person in his life he ever loved as family. Her presence here, reimagined in fiery red, symbolizes both the trauma that forged Hannibal's cannibalistic compulsion and the haunting memory that continues to shape his identity. The inclusion of Will's body tangled within this forest suggests that Hannibal's relationship with him is inexorably tied to this primal wound; that perhaps Will is becoming another person who Hannibal loves but in a way that is inseparable from violence, consumption, and possession. Will is not merely a surrogate for Mischa, but a figure who pushes Hannibal beyond memory into the possibility of a new, distorted form of intimacy—one in which destruction and devotion become indistinguishable. The forest imagery reinforces this mythic quality, as if Hannibal's psyche is a dark, enchanted landscape where memory, desire, and death grow into one tangled ecosystem. The symbolism of the firefly is also important to Hannibal as found out by Will; Lecter's childhood home has many fireflies surrounding the premises that light up the night. (Fig. 13) In this context, the firefly becomes a paradoxical emblem: a fragile creature whose brief luminescence cuts through darkness, yet whose beauty is fleeting and easily extinguished. Within Hannibal's psyche, the firefly evokes both nostalgia and menace—an echo of innocence tainted by trauma, a light that only illuminates the violence it hovers over. The firefly's contradictions render it especially amenable for metaphorical

⁴⁰ See: @theseavoices at <https://www.instagram.com/>.

translation.⁴¹ It is dull by day; other-worldly by night; its unprepossessing exterior conceals the presence of great beauty. The analogy of the firefly with hidden riches concealed in a mundane exterior made it an obvious symbol for the soul itself. Its presence in the forest portrait hints at Hannibal's capacity to cloak brutality in elegance, to transform death into an aesthetic spectacle. At the same time, the firefly's role as a guide in darkness resonates with Will's struggle: he is drawn into Hannibal's world by these glimmers of beauty and understanding, even as they lead him deeper into danger.

In contrast, Will's portrait reveals a more fluid and delicate state of being. (Fig. 14). From his head a turbulent sea spills, upon which a sailboat precariously balances, threatening at any moment to capsize. This watery expanse embodies Will's fragile sense of self and his constant oscillation between control and collapse. Not only that, but it emulates an important moment in the series when Will sets off on a similar looking sailboat and sails across the Atlantic from Baltimore to Europe to find Hannibal.⁴² The portrait also emulates a shocking moment in the show when Hannibal drugs Will and then proceeds to try and cut open Will's skull with an electric saw. (Fig. 15) The open head motif, here reimagined not as grotesque violence but as an oceanic expanse, underscores the vulnerability of Will's psyche and the porousness of his identity. The sailboat atop the waves is both literal and symbolic: it references his transatlantic pursuit of Hannibal yet also gestures toward the archetype of the lone voyager adrift at sea, navigating uncertain waters between madness and clarity, freedom and captivity. The sea itself has long been a metaphor for the unconscious, its vast depths representing the hidden recesses of thought, instinct, and desire. In this context, the turbulent waters spilling from Will's head visualize his fractured mental state, perpetually at risk of drowning under Hannibal's influence. The faint stag emerging from the clouded backdrop further entwines Will with Hannibal's presence, recalling the Stagman motif that stalks his visions throughout the series. The sailboat does not float on neutral waters, but within an ocean already haunted by Hannibal's psychic imprint. Where Hannibal's portrait evokes a rooted, mythic forest tied to memory and trauma, Will's emphasizes flux, instability, and transformation. If Hannibal's psyche is a dark woodland where death and desire are tangled in permanence, Will's is an unsteady sea where identity is always shifting, threatening to be consumed by forces larger than himself.

The following paragraph is what the artist TheSeaVoices wished to say about their work:

...I feel like the experience of Mischa's death in the forest made Hannibal into who he is, she glows like a spark of revenge and his first

⁴¹ Kate Flint, "The Beauty of Fireflies: Transience, Myth, Bioluminescence, and Wonder," *Victorian Beauty* 2023, no. 34 (March 30, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.8867>.

⁴² Nick Antosca, Bryan Fuller, and Steve Lightfoot, "Aperitivo," episode, *Hannibal* (NBC, June 25, 2015).

awakening to the horrors of humanity, he became the monster in the dark instead of fearing it: the trees frame the scene and become the antlers of the [Stagman] on Hannibal's head. Will is in there because Hannibal has a kind of love for him, the only other person to change or have influence on Hannibal, Will wears the coat from the scene where he 'breached' the gates of the Lecter castle. The fireflies represent the connection of creative becoming between Will and Hannibal- the passing of light, his tie pattern is firefly larvae. The Will portrait is about his internal struggle (storm) of needing/wanting the dark form of freedom that Hannibal offers and his simultaneous, overwhelming horror of it. He lures (fishing fly with blood knot), he chases (the boat) and he finally succumbs...⁴³

TheSeaVoices thus focuses on the formative trauma that fuses Hannibal's monstrous appetite with his capacity for love. This resonates with the grotesque, where trauma and transformation are inseparable: with the concept of Hannibal becoming the monster, it suggests a metamorphosis in which the boundaries between victim and predator collapse. The trees sprouting from his head, forming antlers of the Stagman, underscore the hybridity central to grotesque imagery—Hannibal as man, beast, and myth entwined in a single, unstable form. Will's inclusion within this same forest reflects the artist's assertion that Hannibal harbors a deeper love for Will that is inseparable from violence and possession. This makes Will not only an object of fascination but also an active agent in Hannibal's continuing change. Just as Mischa's death once redefined Hannibal, Will's presence catalyzes a new stage of becoming—one in which devotion and destruction blur together. The fireflies, described by the artist as "the connection of creative becoming between Will and Hannibal," heighten this point. They become not only grotesque in their paradoxical beauty with one another but portray *vanitas* symbolism by nature of life, light, and desire. Much like the extinguished candles or decaying flowers in still-life paintings, the fireflies remind us that beauty is transient, destined to fade even as it enchants. Their delicate glow flickers briefly before darkness returns, a visual echo of the fragile balance in Hannibal and Will's relationship—moments of illumination and intimacy always shadowed by the inevitability of violence and death. This concept is also echoed in the detail of Hannibal's tie, patterned with firefly larvae suggesting that this "becoming" is woven into his very identity, an organic process of metamorphosis that is at once intimate and grotesque. Together, the two works highlight the asymmetry of their relationship: Hannibal as the manipulative architect of destiny, and Will as the drifting figure caught in currents that are both perilous and inevitable.

⁴³ @thesevoices, Instagram, April 23, 2025 5:00pm, private digital messages.

Conclusion

What unites *Hannibal*'s imagery—both on-screen and in fan art—is its deep and deliberate dialogue with art history. Through visual languages drawn from vanitas, the grotesque, and the carnivalesque, the series reimagines violence as a site of aesthetic contemplation, transforming horror into beauty and death into design. The *Printed in Blood: Hannibal Artbook* exemplifies how contemporary audiences transform passive viewership into active artistic participation. The fan artists examined—Lin, Prasanth, and TheSeaVoices—reinterpret the show's motifs of consumption, transformation, and mortality through deeply personal and often intimate visual languages. Their works are not imitations but evolutions, extending *Hannibal*'s aesthetic and psychological reach into new, participatory forms of meaning-making. Other fans extend this dialogue across media, translating cinematic imagery with their own compositions that preserve the show's haunting tension between attraction and repulsion.

While this study focuses on only a few examples, they represent a small fragment of a much larger phenomenon: the thousands of fan artworks circulating online and in print that continue to expand the show's symbolic world. This proliferation affirms the vitality of fandom as a contemporary art movement—one that bridges fine art and popular culture, the historical and the digital, the sacred and the profane. Ultimately, *Hannibal* and its fan art form a continuous cycle of creation and reinterpretation. Both confront the viewer with the uneasy coexistence of beauty and brutality, seduction and decay. In doing so, they reaffirm an enduring truth of art history: that from darkness and death, new forms of meaning and beauty are always reborn.



Figure 1 Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera* (Spring) c.1480 tempera grassa on wood
<https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/botticelli-spring>



Figure 2 The Primavera – Vlaming, Jeff, and Bryan Fuller. “Primavera.” Episode. Hannibal 3, no. 2. NBC, June 11, 2015.

<https://screenrant.com/hannibal-murder-tableau-real-meaning-every-explained/>



Figure 3 Damien Hirst, *Mother and Child (Divided)*, exhibition copy 2007 (original 1993), Glass, stainless steel, perspex, acrylic paint, cow, calf and formaldehyde solution
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hirst-mother-and-child-divided-t12751>



Figure 4 Beverly Katz Cross Section - Floyd, A. F., Lightfoot, S., & Fuller, B. (2014, March 28). "Mukozuke." *Hannibal*. episode, NBC.

<https://screenrant.com/hannibal-murder-tableau-real-meaning-every-explained/>



Figure 5 Cherry Tree Man – Fuller, Bryan. “Futamono.” Episode. *Hannibal* 2, no. 6. NBC, April 4, 2014.

<https://screenrant.com/hannibal-murder-tableau-real-meaning-every-explained/>



Figure 6 Adriaen van Utrecht, *Vanitas — "Still Life with Bouquet and Skull,"* c. 1642. oil on canvas

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adriaen_van_Utrecht- Vanitas - _Still_Life_with_Bouquet_and_Skull.JPG



Figure 7 Hannibal's Heart – Vlaming, Jeff, and Bryan Fuller. "Primavera." Episode. Hannibal 3, no. 2. NBC, June 11, 2015.



Figure 8 Hannibal Cast Promo Photo — NBC

<https://www.nbc.com/hannibal/photos/season-1/cast-gallery/280321>



Figure 9 Hannibal Solo Photo — NBC

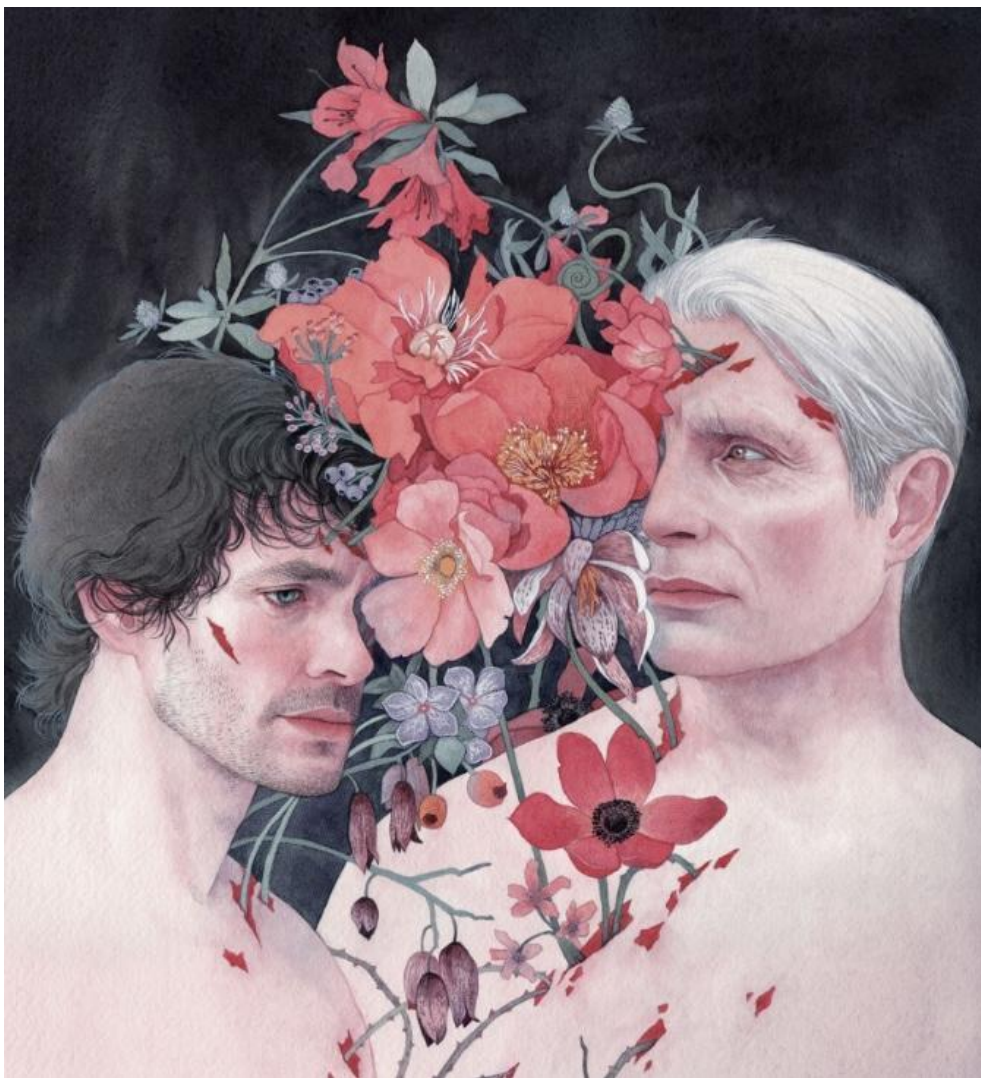


Figure 10 Artist Lin, "Feast," 2022, watercolor

https://www.instagram.com/artist_lin/p/CkVipHuPKCS/

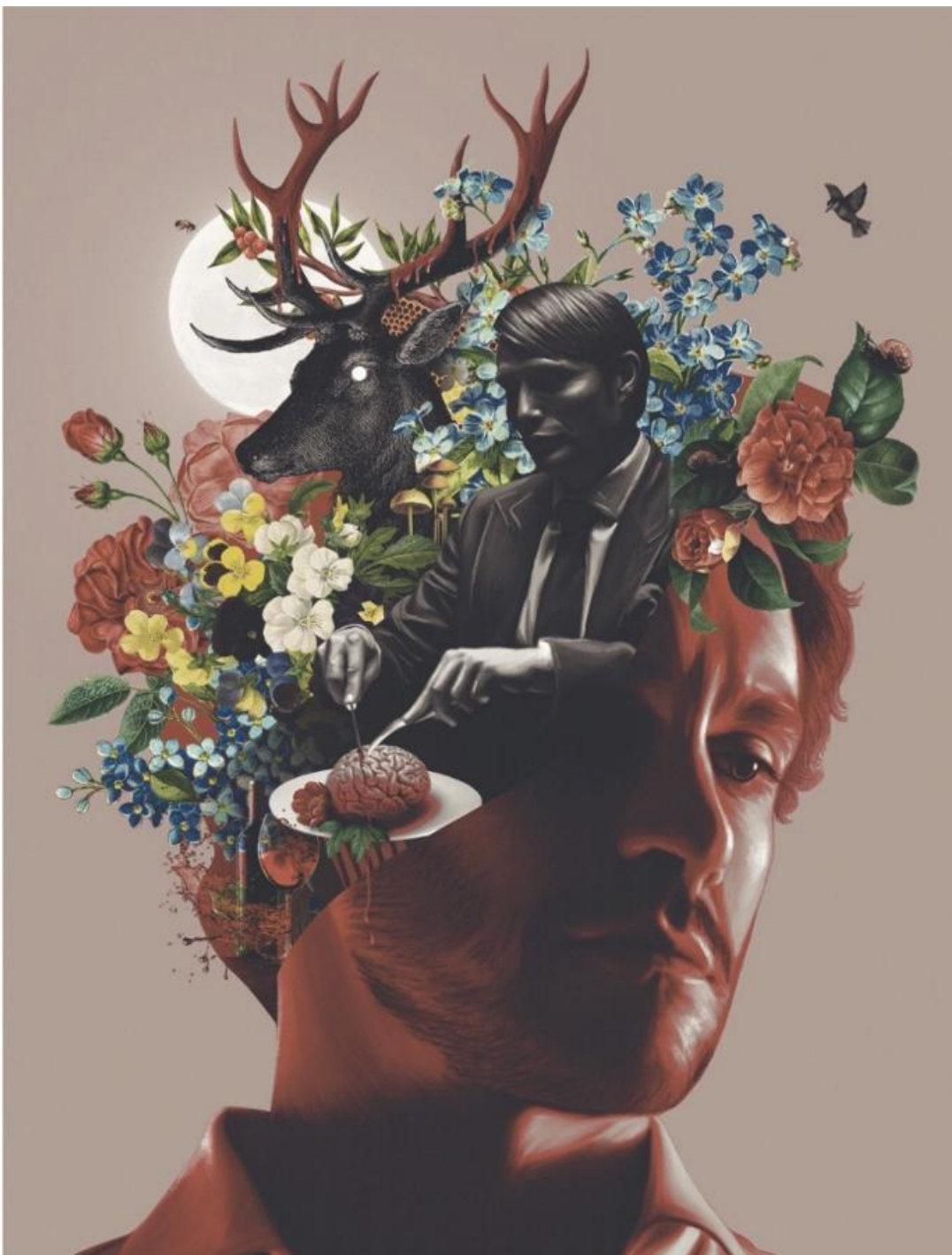


Figure 11 Prasanth, 2022, Digital Media

https://www.instagram.com/apertureanecdotes/p/CmhVDn0jhLJ/?img_index=4



Figure 12 TheSeaVoices, 2022, Digital Media

https://www.instagram.com/p/CkBjTljND4a/?img_index=1



Figure 13 TheSeaVoices, 2022, Digital Media

https://www.instagram.com/p/CkBjTljND4a/?img_index=1



Figure 14 Will Head Slice – "Dolce" Episode 306 – (Photo by: Ian Watson/NBC)
<https://www.nbc.com/hannibal/photos/season-3/photos-from-dolce/2417391>



Figure 15 Will and Fireflies – Burnett, Angelina, Bryan Fuller, and Steve Lightfoot. “Secondo.” Episode. *Hannibal* 3, no. 3. NBC, June 18, 2015.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Leisa Rundquist and Dr. Eva Hericks-Bares for their wonderful guidance on this paper along with the other students in the art history thesis class for their hard work and help in making this thesis a success. I want to also thank my friends and family for helping me be there, and for supporting me through this process and for keeping me sane. Finally, I want to thank the original cast and showrunners of *Hannibal* along with the amazing fans who keep the show alive through their wonderful fan works and ideas. Your creativity, dedication, and passion have transformed the series into something far greater than just a television series, but into an evolving piece of art.

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