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Full Issue

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Digressions **Literary & Art Journal**

Volume 21, 2024

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, MEDIA, AND THE ARTS
HALMOS COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY



Halmos College
of Arts and Sciences
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

NSU
Florida

About *Digressions*

Digressions Literary & Art Journal is an open space for NSU students to IMAGINE, CREATE, and INSPIRE as they share their creative expressions. *Digressions* is furthermore a place where students can share their experiences and ideas with fellow readers through art, poetry, photography, and fiction. Volume 21 features pieces that bring us to fantastical worlds while also including those that allow for introspection, self-reflection, and connection. The pieces are student-generated and student-selected and are reflective of this moment in time.



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Cover Artist Statement

The cover depicts an iris and pupil that melts throughout the space and reflects how art is meant to be seen and appreciated. I wanted the cover to be illustrated and express not only myself as an artist but how the art within *Digressions* has so much to offer. It was truly an honor to have the opportunity to be part of this issue and see how it brings community together through art.

~ Sofia I. Menco Arenas

A Few Words from Our Staff

D*igressions* isn't just a collection of words and images; it's a testament to the boundless imagination that thrives within our student body. It's a platform for exploration, connection, and inspiration. It's a space where students can share their journeys, challenge perspectives, and discover the beauty of artistic expression. It's a place where we can all take a "digression" from the everyday and explore the uncharted territories of our own creativity.

And here at *Digressions*, we know artistic expression doesn't stop at the page or the canvas. Our social media posts capture the energy and creativity that flow through the pages of *Digressions*. We want to create a space where student voices can be heard and celebrated.

This issue is a culmination of countless hours – the late nights spent crafting a poem, the meticulous attention to detail poured into a painting, the countless revisions that breathe life into a story.

Thank you to the artists and writers who submitted their work, and to our dedicated supporters. Thank you for the opportunity to be on the *Digressions* team and bring another inspiring issue.

Digressions would not exist without your dedication and passion.

- Kayla McGee
Digressions Social Media Editor

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W elcome to *Digressions*, Volume 21! This volume could not come together without incredible support from administration, faculty, and of course, the students involved. Thank you to Dean Holly Lynn Baumgartner (Halmos College of Arts & Sciences) and Dr. Shanti Bruce (Chair, Department of Communication, Media, and the Arts) for their continued support of this publication. We are eternally grateful to Dr. Eric Mason for his mentorship to CRDM graduate and DCMA undergraduate students in laying out the volume, and to Professor Kolos Schumy for his work with undergraduate graphic design students in designing the cover.

Thank you to our colleagues in DCMA and HCAS for promoting *Digressions* and encouraging their students to submit their work. We appreciate the collaborative work of the editorial board this year and the hard decisions they made in selecting from the many incredible submissions we received. Finally, thank you to all of the students who created and sent in their work.

- Dr. Mario D'Agostino and Dr. Janine Morris
Digressions Co-Advisors

T hree of the works of fiction in this issue of *Digressions* (those by Castillo, Vega, and Scherer) are stories born of HONR 1000C Myth and Fairy Tale in Modern Culture—an NSU course that explores how the most ancient stories of humanity have contemporary relevance. Tales incorporating universal elements of human life—the journey to adulthood, heroism, exile, death and rebirth—are retold over and over again because their resonance is not bound by time or space. As part of the course, students constructed their own fairy tales based on a coming-of-age epiphany that they personally experienced. These tales were modeled after traditional fairy tale narrative and metaphorical structures, but told each student's unique tale of realization as part of the maturation process. One of the most rewarding aspects of the course, and this assignment, was to see students understand how their own stories have importance as part of these ongoing and meaningful traditions of creativity.

- Dr. Marlisa Santos
Farquhar Honors College Instructor

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INCH



Serendipity

DIANA E. DANCEA

Serendipity: a beautiful accident; a new direction.

Author Statement

"This haiku is about how in life one must learn to always be open to change and have the flexibility for new opportunities that arise. When I was growing up, my plan was always to be a lawyer. However, starting my freshmen year during 2020, I took Calculus 1 and began to see the beauty of Math. I started to finally see that it was more than just formulas, but rather had logic and a reasoning behind it. One continues having goals in life, but also welcomes new dreams."

Forest Awakening

INCHARA KUMAR

Artist Statement

"This piece was painted for a family friend who got into a traumatic car accident and had to stay in ICU for over a month. She's a huge fan of rainbows and sunsets especially, so I decided to combine the two. I had a lot of inspiration from Pinterest about the scenery and finally settled on the forest because I believed the lush greenness can help with the colors I wanted to add."

Love & Desire ISABELLA ROSE RISERVATO



Artist Statement

"The origins of this piece start in Professor Lopez' Painting 1 class, which I took in the Winter semester of 2022. I did not have experience with painting before this class. As a psychology major, I was inspired by the Romanticism movement's emphasis on human psychology and subjective emotion. I flipped endlessly through newspapers and glued together a whimsical collage full of nature, with two people as the focal point. Love is a powerful force that I believe to be the driving force of the world. Without subjective human emotion, life would not be unique and colorful, but instead, uniform and dreary."

The Day You Were Mine

EISHMEL DORT (A.K.A. "PAGE ONE")

We were a slow burn at the point of contention
Your wax was melting under the tension
Heat subtly warping your constitution
The arrival of shade broke the spell of the illusion

Removing the filter of bliss revealed wounds like a tapestry
Each gash, cut, and scratch told the story
I was scratching at your neck and saw my reflection
You were gnawing at me with pain that you couldn't mention

Now you won't even look at me, I want confirmation
Emotions locked in like toxins, you're aching
You held your breath, and yet I kept moving
Wanted you safe, but didn't know what the hell I was doing

What was the point and why did you cry?
What was the point and did I let you die?
I see your smile spread across my mind
It's suffocating believing these soft lies

I want to hold you, I think we should try
I want to hold you, even if you're not mine
Yeah, I still remember the day you were mine
A still image at the scene of a crime

Author Statement

"The inspiration for this piece is the aftermath of a bond I shared with somebody. It's a reflection on the mistakes I didn't see, and the signs that, if I noticed them, would have saved that relationship with that person. It's akin to that state of zooming out of tunnel vision or flow and gaining back perspective."

The Forest Within

LINDSAY SCHERER

Ajea and her parents would always tell each other everything; there were no secrets in the house until Ajea started to hear voices from the forest. Sometimes the voices from the forest got so loud that Ajea had to cover her ears to endure the pain.

“We can help you. If you tell anybody, they will die.”

Ajea desperately wanted the voices to stop, so she slipped into the forest, unnoticed by her parents. As soon as she stepped foot into the forest, Ajea was instantly greeted by the most terrifying sight: shadow figures, looming over her, trapping her in their circle. Ajea crouched to the ground, trembling and sobbing, her fingers digging into the soil beneath her. Before she knew it, the demons were attacking her with their pointed, yellow claws and their sharp, bloodthirsty teeth.

Disoriented, Ajea walked out of the forest bruised, beaten, and covered in gashes. She left a bloody trail from the forest to her house. When she finally returned home her parents greeted her, but not like usual. They seemed distracted, closed off as if they were hiding secrets of their own. They paid no attention to their daughter’s mauled state, and the family sat in silence around the dinner table, each picking at their plates. That night, as she started to drift off to sleep, Ajea heard the forest again, “We can fix you.”

A week passed and no voices were heard until they suddenly came back louder than ever.

“We can help you. If you tell anybody, they will die.”

Ajea was afraid to tell her parents; she didn’t want anything bad to happen to them or for them to be disappointed in her for not being able to get through this by herself. She crept into the forest once more and the same ritual took place: Ajea crowded by a circle of demons who enjoyed her pain. Again, she stumbled out of the forest but instead of eating dinner with her parents, she went straight to sleep.

Another week passed before Ajea heard the voices, so loud that the pressure in her skull was too much to handle.

“WE CAN HELP YOU. IF YOU TELL ANYBODY, THEY WILL DIE.”

Desperate to alleviate her pain, Ajea shamefully ventured into the forest, knowing her fate. For the third and final time, she did not fight back, she let the demons slash, bite, and tear her apart as she squirmed on the ground covered in her blood. Ajea barely made it out of the forest, dragging her body along on her forearms and knees. That night when she got home, her parents finally saw what they had been overlooking, Ajea's scars, her fresh gashes, rivers of blood creating tributaries all over her body. Sobbing, Ajea told her parents everything – the voices from the forest, the demons, and the brutal attacks. Her parents demanded that they go into the forest with her immediately. At first, Ajea was hesitant, she did not want anything bad to happen to her parents, but they convinced her that together they would be stronger than the demons.

Upon entering the forest, the demons immediately surrounded the family. Ajea was frozen in fear, squinting her eyes shut, but her parents stood tall, grabbed her hands, and walked straight through the malignant spirits. Their confidence and fearlessness scared the demons away and Ajea opened her eyes to find her parents still by her side and the demons were nowhere in sight. As Ajea walked out of the forest for the final time, hand in hand with her parents, she understood. She understood that being lured into the forest by the voices is normal, but she must never go alone.

Author Statement

"The Forest Within' is a fictional piece reflecting real-life coming-of-age experiences. Throughout the tale, Ajea is lured into the 'forest,' a metaphor for her declining mental health and its convincing nature to depend on unhealthy coping mechanisms. By the end, she recognizes the importance of allowing her parents to be there for her and that it is normal to experience these emotions, but she must depend on others' help to avoid being lured into the forest. My inspiration behind this piece was to highlight the significance of understanding one's mental health and being able to depend on others for help."



Grieving

SARA MENCO ARENAS

To all of those who grieve
Those who are struggling
Those who look back with a smile
And those who, despite the time that has passed,
Still don't know what to do with themselves

To all who have dreamed and lost
The ones who carry anger mixed with bitterness
Stuck in a "what if?"

All this has taught me there is no manual to cope.
There are no instructions on how to do it right.

But this grieving is mine.
My manifestation of love
My tears flowing from what my heart feels.
And how my soul misses your lively presence.

Let me not be ashamed of my longing.
Of my conspicuous ache

For I will not stay like this forever.
But let me miss you today.

Author Statement

"This piece was initially inspired by a friend of mine whose father passed away, I wanted it to be about everything that comes when a loved one is gone. It took me a couple weeks to finish it, as I couldn't pinpoint what remains once that person you love has passed. Until as I was crafting this piece, my baby cat passed away. I was ashamed because I thought my feelings would be overlooked, as it was about my pet rather than a person. But weeks passed, and I realized grief is one's own, outside of who it may be about, and shouldn't be dictated by anyone else other than oneself."



Anthophile

PRATHA RATTAN

Artist Statement

"In this piece, I aimed to challenge societal norms and address prevalent issues such as toxic masculinity. By observing the struggles men face in expressing vulnerability to conform to societal expectations, I wanted to show a merge of femininity associated with flowers with masculine figures, symbolizing the harmony and beauty in embracing both aspects. By depicting these forces not as oppositions but as complementary elements, I hope to inspire conversations and promote acceptance of vulnerability as strength."



Self Portrait

LUCIANA MARIE FERNANDEZ

Artist Statement

"As a studio artist, I focus primarily on abstract pieces and non-objective paintings. This was the first time I've ever made such a realistic piece. My self-portrait represents myself in my environment. I experimented with acrylic paint while figuring out how to recreate textures, materials, and close-to-identical color palettes."

The Evil Queen

SONIA RAO

The evil queen was not always evil nor a queen. When Grimhilde was a young adult, she was simply a courtier's daughter. She played with her friends, rode her family's horses, and fell in love with a boy from the court. She was no older than 16 and he 18. In her eyes, he could do no wrong. The tall and proud manner in which he stood, the flow of his golden hair, or the grin that grew wide as his eyes locked with hers all made her fall deeply in love. She was a beautiful fair maiden—the fairest in the land, one may dare to say. Her beauty was recognizable from miles away, and the young man too fell in love with her.

The young couple began to meet in the court garden during the late hours of the night when only the stars and the moon were witnesses to this budding love blossom. However, Grimhilde's beauty was so prominent that it got hold of the king's attention as well. When she turned eighteen, the king offered a marriage proposal to Grimhilde's father.

Honored by this offer, her father bowed to the king and swiftly departed the court to inform Grimhilde of her upcoming nuptials. However, when he approached her chambers he heard the laugh of not only his daughter, but that of a man as well. Enraged, he kicked the door open and witnessed both the young man and his daughter half-dressed sitting on the bed. He was incensed and picked up a poker from the hearth and began to beat the young man until he successfully chased him out. Unsure what to do, Grimhilde began pleading with her father not to be upset as the young man and her were secretly betrothed to one another but she did not know how to tell her father. She wept and pleaded for her father to put the fire poker down and to listen to reason. However, Grimhilde's pleas fell upon deaf ears. Her father threw the fireplace poker down and stormed out of his daughter's chambers leaving Grimhilde sobbing to herself.

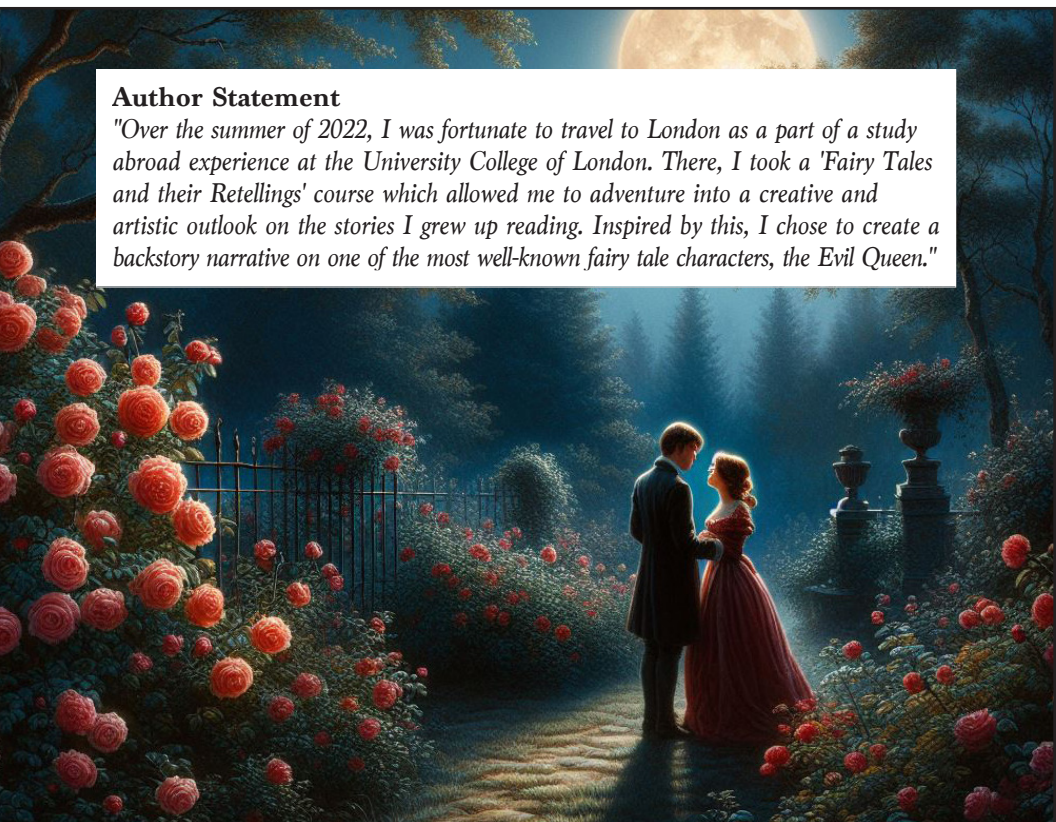
Her father grabbed one of their family's horses and began riding into the woods. While riding, all these thoughts arose in his mind. His daughter has a betrothed already. This will tarnish her reputation. Marrying the king will bring great power and prestige to the family. But his daughter is clearly in love, but this boy is beneath her so it cannot be an option. Grimhilde's father eventually came across a lovely yet neglected cottage in the woods. Intrigued, he dismounted from his horse and approached the wooden door entrapped within vines. He knocked on the door and an old witch slowly creaked it open. The witch appeared old, haggard

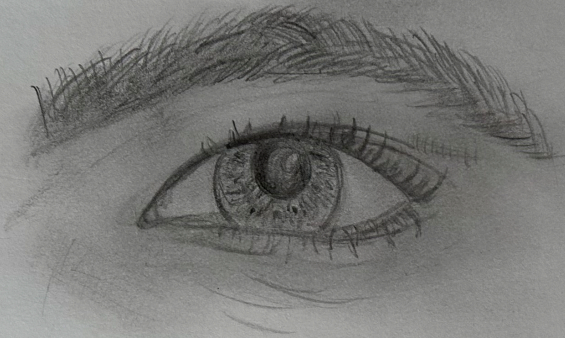
and frail, warm yet cold, stern yet welcoming. Grimhilde's father felt a sense of comfort with the old woman, and as his mind raced he needed one to speak to. He explained his situation to the witch and offered to pay her in gold for a solution. Intrigued by his problem and offer of gold, the witch created a concoction to have the young man and only the young man consume.

Grimhilde's father accepted the potion with haste as he wanted to rid his family of the problem at hand. He then rode back to the castle on his horse directly to the kitchen. He ordered the cook to make a concoction that must be sent directly to the young man and no one else. Obliging to the request, the cook made a cup of tea, and a handmaiden delivered it to the young man. Once the young man drank the cup of tea, an immense pain overcame him. He began to scream, a scream so loud it could be heard reverberating throughout the castle. Grimhilde's father, anticipating that something would befall the young man, stormed into the young man's chamber, soon followed by Grimhilde herself. They both looked around but curiously were not able to find him anywhere. They looked and looked until Grimhilde peered into an oval mirror placed on the wall and saw her beloved trapped within with no way out.

Author Statement

"Over the summer of 2022, I was fortunate to travel to London as a part of a study abroad experience at the University College of London. There, I took a 'Fairy Tales and their Retellings' course which allowed me to adventure into a creative and artistic outlook on the stories I grew up reading. Inspired by this, I chose to create a backstory narrative on one of the most well-known fairy tale characters, the Evil Queen."





Blue eyes are soulless,
when they stare into your eyes,
it's as if they pierce your soul,

& it frightens me.

**Like a portal to another world,
You can never trust blue eyes,

& that's why I love them.**

Blue Eyes

RACHEL TAYLOR

Artist Statement

"February 14th, 2022, I sketched a concept of the 'Lover's Eye' as an homage to King George IV's forbidden love and ill-fated affair with Maria Fitzherbert during the Victorian Era. Despite their inability to marry, King George gifted Maria a portrait of his eye in a locket, to keep him close to her heart, always. This symbolizes the gravity and intricacies the windows to our soul possess.

Drawing inspiration from a long line of forbidden individuals that had caught my own proverbial eye, I realized my tendencies and weaknesses. I concluded: blue eyes make me cry. It stems from a past figure. The beauty, the mystery, never knowing where you stand. The lack of pigment almost represented a lack of trust and self control. Over the years, blue eyes became synonymous with heart break. And yet, still I found myself at the mercy of some wild-haired, blue-eyed, addictive personality which only ended up changing my world forever."



Him

ROSELINE JEAN-PIERRE

Artist Statement

"I originally had no purpose for taking photos, though I noticed his pure happiness in the moment. Bliss and light, excitement captured in memory, like the Polaroid before him."

The Uncle and the Wolf

JOCELYN VEGA

Once upon a time, there were two orphaned young girls who lived with their uncle. They lived in a small cottage in the woods. The older sister, Raven, was asked to cook, clean, and take care of the other younger sister. Her uncle was ugly, hairy, and old with no one to love him, and as a result he was angry and cruel. He took out all his anger on Raven by yelling at her, hitting her, and making messes that she would have to clean.

Raven didn't understand why the old man didn't like her, and was always so nice to the younger sister. As Raven grew older, she started to understand why the old man was so much nicer to her younger sister. Her younger sister was much prettier, with heavenly long blonde hair and eyes as blue as the sky on a bright summer's day. Raven had eyes as black as coal, and hair as black as a cold winter's night.

Raven asked her younger sister, "Dove, why does uncle like you so much?"

Dove responded, "Well uncle likes to play with me at night when you're asleep and the next day he's always just happier." Raven didn't know what she meant by "play with," but she had an eerie feeling in her stomach. So instead of sleeping the next night, Raven stayed up all night, but nothing happened.

The next night Raven stayed up again. This time she heard a creak of the door. She peeked from over her covers and saw that her uncle was getting into Dove's bed. Raven stood up immediately, grabbed her sister, and ran out. Their uncle followed them yelling for their return, "Silly girls – don't you know there are worse dangers in the woods?" The girls ran into the woods, knowing the dangers in the woods couldn't be worse than the dangers in that cottage.

Once they were deep in the woods, they were approached by a wolf.

"What are you two young girls doing all alone in the woods?"

The girls approached the wolf in hope that he would help them find shelter. Instead the wolf opened his big mouth, revealing his sharp teeth. Raven shoved Dove out of the way, and before she could even scream, he ate her. "Silly girl – don't you know better than to trust a wolf?" The

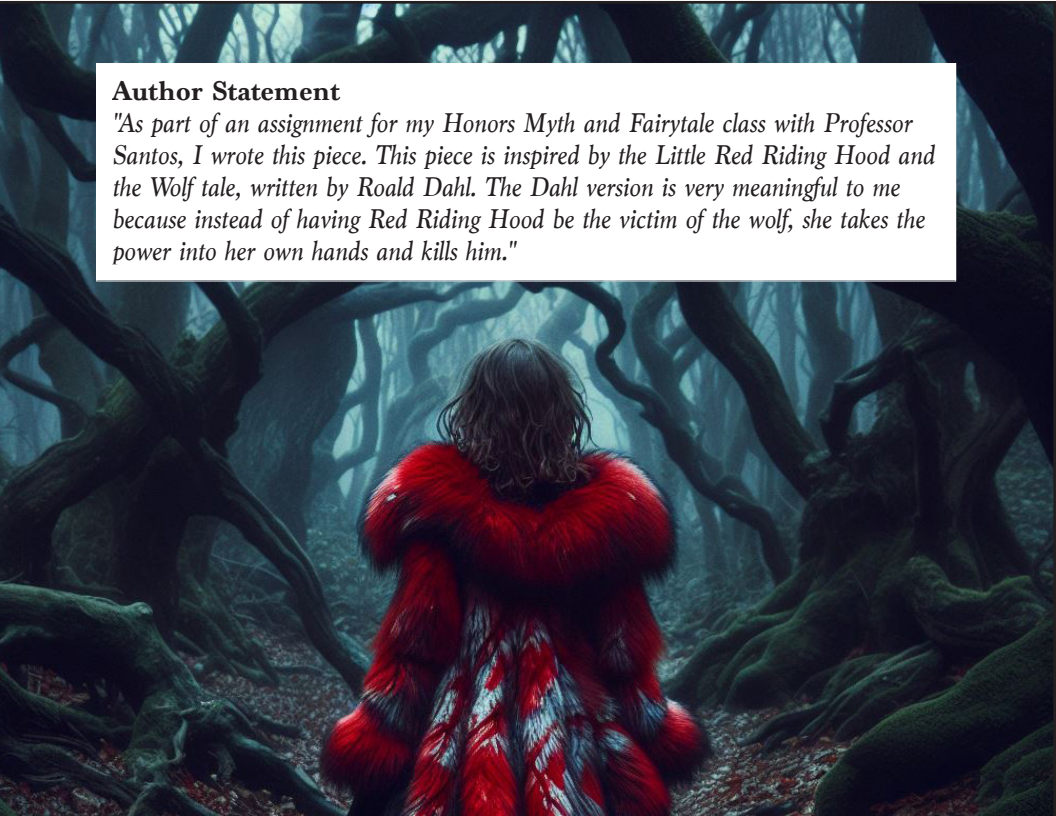
wolf laughed, as he continued on his way in search of the younger sister.

Dove found a small hole to hide in. Inside the hole, she waited until the wolf huffed his way past her. She cried and swore that she would avenge her older sister's death, and she got to work.

The following year, the wolf walked through the same woods, he chuckled to himself as he heard the weeping of a young child. As he approached her to ask what she was doing all alone, Dove jumped and attacked him. "Silly wolf – don't you know better than to trust a young girl in the woods?" She laughed to herself as she walked the woods in her new blood-stained fur coat.

Author Statement

"As part of an assignment for my Honors Myth and Fairytale class with Professor Santos, I wrote this piece. This piece is inspired by the Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf tale, written by Roald Dahl. The Dahl version is very meaningful to me because instead of having Red Riding Hood be the victim of the wolf, she takes the power into her own hands and kills him."





Untitled

MARILYN YANES-PEREZ

Artist Statement

"This charcoal drawing captures a pivotal moment in my artistic journey. It was a still life created for students to draw. This was the art piece that rekindled my passion for art during my first college class. This teddy bear reminded me of the profound joy found in art. This piece marks the beginning of my artistic devotion and serves as a reminder of the transformative power of art in my life."

Later, Traumagator

JYLLIAN BROWN

SKETCH LOCATION: *Near a port-a-potty outside the Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia, PA*

CHARACTERS:

- **JOIE** – 70 years old, suffers from years-long depression, just wants to enjoy another baseball game with his best friend Wally but the stadium security has other plans, doesn't have the energy to put up a fight
- **WALLY** – unknown age, licensed therapist from the UK, emotional support alligator for Joie, likes hugs, wants to enjoy another baseball game with his best friend but faces challenges of discrimination, fights to get what he wants through intellectual argumentation
- **FOREIGN FAN** – 32 years old, from Europe, flew to see the game because it was their late wife's favorite team and wants to honor her memory, will do so by causing a ruckus and demanding certain parties be turned away
- **SECURITY GUARD** – 49 years old, from New York, wants to keep their ballpark safe from all reptiles because they're scared of lizards, not afraid to deny basic rights to achieve that goal
- **CHILD** – 5 years old, waiting for parent to exit the bathroom, sees Joie and Wally and immediately wants to become friends with the latter, attempts to do so by showing off his undeniable charm and presenting food offerings

**all pronouns are temporary and subject to change based on actor's preference*

The scene opens with two characters already onstage: CHILD, who is waiting near a port-a-potty, and SECURITY GUARD, who is napping in a chair off to the side.

JOIE and WALLY enter.

JOIE

(nervous sigh) Geez, I sure hope they don't make a big deal out of this, Wal. You remember what happened last time? With the old geezer at the sushi restaurant?

JOIE chuckles softly. WALLY stared at JOIE blankly. WALLY slowly blinks his eyes.

JOIE

I'm sorry. I know you told me to stop using humor as a coping mechanism but...I'm just nervous, y'know? You're right, you're right. I shouldn't be. It'll be fine. Right?

JOIE looks to WALLY, hoping to receive some kind of response but to no avail. WALLY is bouncing lightly, shifting from side to side, and whimpering in discomfort.

JOIE

What's wrong buddy? You gotta pee?

WALLY nods vigorously. JOIE looks around and spots a port-a-potty.

JOIE

Ah, there we go. C'mon, bud.

JOIE and WALLY make their way over to the port-a-potty and stand in line behind CHILD. CHILD is seen swaying back and forth and blowing raspberries out of boredom. CHILD abruptly turns around and spots the man-gator duo.

CHILD

(excited screaming) EEE!!! Lyle Lyle Crocodile! Sing the song, sing the song!

CHILD claps and jumps up and down with excitement.

JOIE

Woah okay slow down there, pal. My friend here is an alligator, not no singing crocodile. See, the difference between the two is all in the...

CHILD

(cutting him off) "Agil-lator"? Even cooler! Can I pet him please please pleeeeeeeaaaaaaase?

JOIE chuckles at CHILD's adorable pleading.

JOIE

Of course you can! Although, he prefers hugs.

WALLY stands up on two feet, walks over to CHILD, and gives them a hug. CHILD is so overjoyed that they begin screaming again. At that moment, FOREIGN FAN walks in, decked out in Phillies fan gear, and stops in his tracks upon seeing CHILD trapped in the gator's arms and screaming, seemingly out of terror.

FOREIGN FAN

(in a thick European accent) Not again. (He drops everything dramatically.)

FOREIGN FAN

TALIA, MY DARLING! I WILL SAVE YOU!

FOREIGN FAN lunges towards WALLY, ripping him away from CHILD, and tries to fight him. His moves are very sloppy, uncoordinated, and quite frankly embarrassing. WALLY barely needs to move to dodge his blows, mostly just standing there in disbelief. After one last pathetic punch attempt, the gator slowly turns to look at his human companion with concern as the wannabe-hero huffs from overexertion. JOIE is immobilized by shock.

CHILD

Hey! What's the big idea mister?!

FOREIGN FAN is brought back to reality and rushes over to CHILD. He places his hands on the latter's shoulders and checks for wounds.

FOREIGN FAN

Oh, my Talia. Are you alright?

CHILD

I'm fine, and my name isn't Talia.

CHILD pushes FOREIGN FAN away.

JOIE

Kid, is this your pop-pop?

CHILD

No, my mommy is in the bathroom. I don't know who this weirdo is.

FOREIGN FAN

I apologize. I look at you and I am reminded of my Talia. My wife. *(He turns to look at WALLY again.)* This thing- this creature. He... he killed her. Ripped limb from limb on expensive airplane boat in Everglades. Right in front of my eyes I see my wife die, thirteen years ago today. I come here now, all the way from [European country] to see her favorite sportsball team. To honor her memory. And you? *(He looks at JOIE who begins to shrink into himself.)* You bring him here. Traumagator. Her killer. *(Rising in anger.)* You slap me in my face with disrespect. If my wife cannot be here to see this game, then he shouldn't be either. I will rip him limb from limb just like he did to her!

FOREIGN FAN lunges towards WALLY again, this time with more vigor and a hearty battle cry. JOIE and CHILD both swoop in to protect the innocent gator. The sound of chaos awakens the ballpark's SECURITY GUARD.

SECURITY GUARD

Woah, woah, woah. Break it up, break it up. What seems to be the-
(*He spots WALLY. He begins to scream and jump around in fear.*)
AHHHHH!!! OH GOD. IS THAT AN ALLIGATOR? MAN,
I'M SO EFFING SCARED OF ALLIGATORS, BRO.

WALLY clears his throat.

WALLY

(*a sophisticated Brit*) Well, it appears that my presence—my mere existence—is causing a bit of a disruption. My sincerest apologies to those whom I have unnerved. I assure you it was never my intent to cause any form of inconvenience or...

FOREIGN FAN and SECURITY GUARD promptly begin screaming and shouting various profanities. CHILD cannot contain his excitement.

[*Overlapping*]

CHILD: He speaks!
FOREIGN FAN: Demon! Demon! Beelzebub!
WALLY: Name calling is rude, sir.
SECURITY GUARD: I think I'm gonna vomit.
JOIE: Is this really necessary?
CHILD: I love him!

[*Overlapping*]

SECURITY GUARD

(*in hysterics*) I never shoulda left NYC. What kind of sinister black magic is this?!

CHILD

Huh? Why are you guys scared?

WALLY

In their defense, it's not every day you see an intellectual like myself at a ballpark.

FOREIGN FAN

(*disgusted*) And he's British! Ugh, get this satan spawn out of here!

CHILD & JOIE

Stop being mean to my friend!

CHILD runs to give WALLY another hug. FOREIGN FAN immediately pulls them back.

FOREIGN FAN

No!

SECURITY GUARD

Stand back! Taser! (*he tases WALLY*)

JOIE

Oh my god!

WALLY

(*in pain*) Oh bollocks!

JOIE runs over to WALLY and kneels down next to him, making sure the latter is alright.

SECURITY GUARD

Ha... Taser? I hardly even know 'er! (*blows off taser*)

JOIE

(*putting on his metaphorical big boy pants*)
What the hell is wrong with you people!?

SECURITY GUARD

Well, it all started when my dad left...

JOIE

NO! YOU JUST TASED MY F##KING ALLIGATOR! You know what, I have had enough of your xenophobia and discrimination. I'm sorry about your wife's misfortune. I understand your pain and your anger, but you have no right to take it out on Wally.

FOREIGN FAN

(*pause*) That's a dumb name for an alligator.

WALLY

Oh, shut your trap!

JOIE

I know loss, okay? I lost three family members and four lifelong friends in two weeks. I shut down in a big, deep depression. You know what got me through it? Wally. If it weren't for him and his years of wisdom from studying at the Reptilian College of Psychology in Caimanbridge, I don't know if I'd even be here right now. So what if he's got a funky little accent? So what if he's got green scales instead of skin? Wally may be an emotional support alligator, but he's human just like us. Cut me and him, we bleed the same.

There's a moment of silence, quickly broken by SECURITY GUARD sniffing. CHILD and FOREIGN FAN, who were previously standing and staring in awe, begin clapping slowly then vigorously.

FOREIGN FAN

That... was... beautiful.

WALLY

(wiping a tear) Indeed, it was.

FOREIGN FAN

Perhaps I judged you too soon, traumagator. *(He helps WALLY up.)* You're nothing like the beast that killed my Talia. You're actually pretty cool. She would have loved to meet you. Maybe we can get a drink sometime at nearby pub?

WALLY

Honestly, I could really go for a cricket martini right now.
Shaken, not stirred.

CHILD

I could go for an apple juice.

JOIE

Not right now, though. We've all got a Phillies game to catch.

They begin to walk towards the park's entrance but are abruptly stopped by SECURITY GUARD.

SECURITY GUARD

Not happening, bud.

JOIE

What?

WALLY

Pardon?

SECURITY GUARD

You're not bringing that thing into my park.

JOIE

I just said he's an emotional support animal, I can show you his papers if you want but...

SECURITY GUARD

I don't care about that. Your story was very touching. I understand the situation; I'm an empath. I love the Florida Gators, don't get me wrong, but nothing, and I mean NOTHING, will EVER make me pity a real alligator. I can barely even look at him, ugh, makes me sick. I've only felt hatred towards one thing my whole life and that is lizards. Of any shape and size. And that freak of nature right there is my biggest nightmare. So, you can either get out of here and never look back, or you can start searching for alligator sized coffins.

WALLY

Do we need to unpack that?

JOIE

Don't bother with this guy, Wal. It's clear we're not gonna change his mind. Let's take the moral high ground and just go home.

WALLY

Moral high ground? No, Joie. When they go low, we go lower. And I've got to take a wee.

WALLY sneaks up and urinates on SECURITY GUARD's shoes. SECURITY GUARD screams until he passes out.

WALLY

Now we can leave.

CHILD

Nooo!

CHILD runs towards WALLY once more and succeeds in hugging him.

CHILD

Goodbye, Mr. Gator. I'll miss you. (*sniff*)

WALLY

I'll miss you, too, friend. And do not copy what you just saw me do.

CHILD

You got it! Oh, here. I want you to have this. (*CHILD pulls a soggy hot dog out of their pocket and rips it in half, handing half to JOIE and the other half to WALLY.*) I'll never forget you both.

FOREIGN FAN

See you later, traumagator.

CHILD and FOREIGN FAN wave goodbye to their new friends. JOIE and WALLY exit.

THE END.

Author Statement

"This piece, inspired by the news story about Joie Henney and his emotional support alligator, Wally, being denied entry into a Phillies game, was written as a final project for the course Comedy and Improvisation (THEA1500). What started as a random sketch idea quickly turned into a humorous social commentary on unwarranted discrimination and xenophobia. The sketch features Joie and Wally, based on the real life man-gator duo with just a few creative liberties taken, and three fictional characters of varying ages and backgrounds. In a world of Security Guards, we must come together to be the Child."



Fish Market

ARIA NICOLETTE TAN

Artist Statement

"Fish Market' is about connection, community, and silence. Inside 'Fish Market,' there are a few narratives. My pieces 'Introduction,' 'Boyhood,' 'Adulthood,' and 'Conclusion' follow the journey of a boy learning how to fish, growing into a man, and how that affects his relationship to his community. We also see an internal storyline with the fish in the market. I want to challenge how we view our overlooked products, like sardines. We should recognize these were living creatures, respect, and appreciate them. Entire communities are supported by the sea. Acknowledging fish and fish markets will help us feel a part of something bigger than ourselves."

The Truth about Satan

MAHIR ABRAR

In a divine Earth, where miracles blend,
A story of self-made mortals, I will pen.
Of divinity they chase, in battles steeped,
Yet in their hearts, the same pains creep.

"Pray, lest the Gods do death and bloodshed!"
"Fast, lest the Gods send disease!"
Fearing divine demise, when instead,
It is human beings who cause all of these.

Unsparingly spearing their enemies,
Brandishing their religion, ready to die.
Only for them both to bleed the same blood,
Only for them both to go home and cry.

"Our god has distinguished us!"
"He gave us favors that others were denied!"
Yet a mother's scream over her dead son
Sounds the same from either side.

"We'll go to Heaven and they'll go to Hell!"
"We'll be given the ultimate prize!"
But a day will come, when all are dead and done,
Who'll remember their sacrifice?

Gathering in their bloodied temples,
Praying to the Lord for mercy,
Kneeling on neighbors' bones in noble cathedrals,
Is there a greater show of irony?

The sacred texts all tell
Of a fiery Hell
And punishments devoid of mercy.
What if the monster they foretell,
Who means nothing well,
Wasn't Satan, but humanity?

Author Statement

"I grew up in an ultra-religious environment and was often exposed to hostility towards those who may not share the views of those close to me. It caused me to question much of the status quo in my life, leading to me penning this poem."



Soar to the Skies

MARILYN YANES-PEREZ

Artist Statement

"My art piece emerged from a deeply personal journey navigating idiopathic intracranial hypertension amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Struggling with the loss of sight and comprehension due to my learning disorder, compounded by the absence of family support during crucial medical appointments, I felt trapped in uncertainty and pain. The inclusion of wings symbolizes my battle with psoriasis, reflecting how stress manifests physically through skin irritation, akin to birds plucking their feathers.

Through my art, I aim to convey the profound struggles I faced, shedding light on navigating illness and advocating for oneself amidst adversity."

The Math Behind Travel

DIANA E. DANCEA

Traveling the globe
means to use geodesics;
flying through the sky.

Author Statement

"This haiku represents one of the many applications of Math in the real world! During my sophomore year, I took a theoretical math class called 'Differential Geometry' where we learned about different surfaces in multiple dimensions and how to find the distances in these spaces. A 'geodesic' is the curve that represents the shortest path between two points, it essentially is the equivalent of a line in 3D; a real-world example is the path an airplane takes!"



A Pocket of Sunshine

INCHARA KUMAR

Artist Statement

"Sunflowers are my favorite flower, and to me it represents positivity for the future, growth from the past, and connection with my family. This particular piece was a gift to my sister for her birthday before I left for college so she could be reminded of me whenever she misses me. I notice that I tend to gravitate towards flora whenever I paint with acrylics, which is amusing."

My Name

SHALET JAMES

It is a six-letter word.
Unfamiliar to the ears.
There is no definition, no proper origin.
It is the bird soaring above the leaves,
Unbothered by the murmur below it.

People often question after glancing at my two younger sisters,
"Where is Charity?"
"She's Hope, she's Faith, how come you aren't Charity?"

Their expectations evade me.
I am not who they want me to be.
Like my name,
I am spared from stereotypes.
From the assumptions of society.

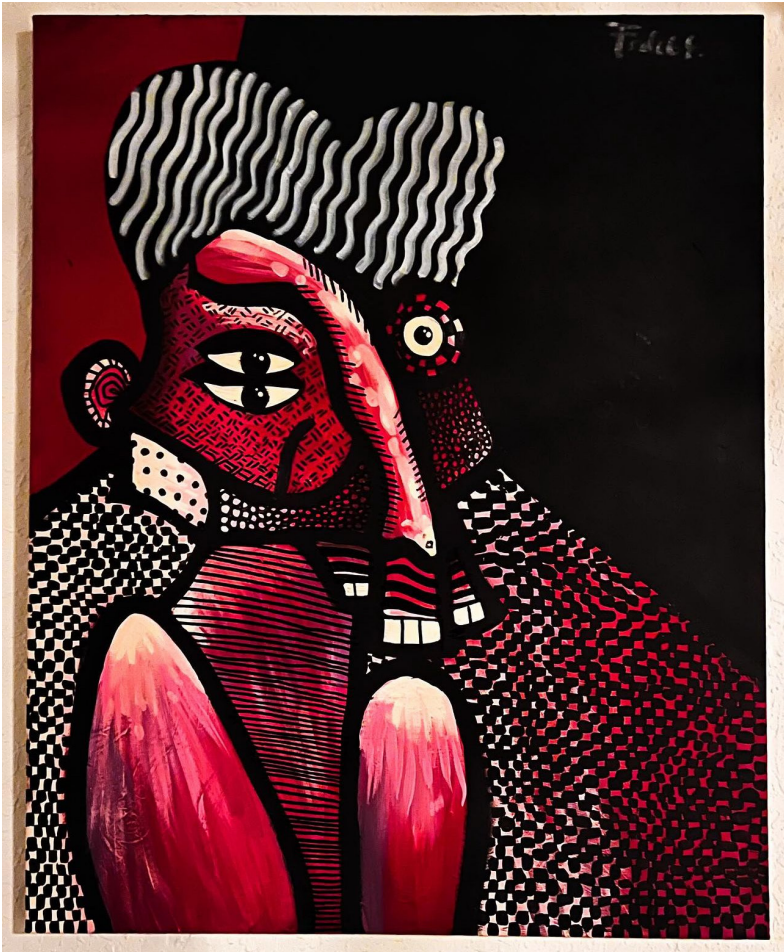
People pause to make me say it once more,
To make sure they heard it correctly.
A foreign vibration.
With two syllables, it ricochets off the tongue.
It clashes with anything they've heard before.

I used to wish it was normal,
Not mistaken as French or a vegetable.
A word with a definition and origin.

That's changed now.
Yes.
I create the definition.

Author Statement

"I found strength in embracing my uniqueness. This poem reflects my journey of longing for 'normal' to discovering empowerment in individuality. Through this piece, I celebrate my ability to define myself on my own terms. As you read my poem, I hope you feel inspired to reflect on your own journey of self-discovery and find strength in what makes you, you."



Eyes Without a Face

FIDEL PEREZ

Artist Statement

"Eyes Without a Face,' is a self-portrait rendered in acrylic. It encapsulates a profound exploration of emotional complexity. The canvas, awash in multiple shades of red, delineated by bold black lines, forms a torso composed of intriguing patterns within generalized shapes. Three piercing eyes, a discernible mouth, and nose coalesce to evoke a sense of enigmatic solitude. The predominant red hues convey a spectrum of emotions—from passion to danger—while the stark black lines hint at the boundaries that encapsulate the self. White accents punctuate the composition, alluding to maturity and introspective wisdom."

Threads

JULIANNA R. PATALANO

Peering across the forest floor
The fly buzzes along
Zipping and zooming
Then suddenly...
"Fortuna shines brightly on me this day!"

The fly comes across a beautiful,
Intricate artwork woven
By nature's loom itself.
Delicacy competing with Minerva's craft.
The silver wisps of light flicker
Through the glistening threads
Creating a haunting dance.

"I must get closer!"
Zip
 ZIP
 Zi—
Stuck. Frozen. Petrified.

The fly's wings flutter
Faster than a hummingbird,
And with all the beauty
Of Venus De Milo herself...
The fly is frozen where it began.

As the silver wind melts into
The golden glow of a new dawn,
Descending from Heaven itself,
A savior for the fly?

At this idea, the fly pauses,
The fruitless pursuit of freedom
Forgotten— if for just a moment.
This stranger softly tucks the fly in
Laying silken sheets across its frail wings
And the fly drifts into a deep slumber.

"Fortuna shines brightly upon us today, my friend!"
Whispers the mysterious figure—
All is quiet and I am alone again.

Author Statement

"This piece is meant to speak to the conflict between the ideals of fate and luck. It is also meant to serve as reminder to the audience that life is often complex and unfair. One creature's demise serves as another's livelihood. I drew inspiration for 'Threads' from both nature and mythology. Even the title references the fates, weaving and cutting the threads of life. I hope you enjoy this piece and that it provides the space for you to reflect on yourself and the world around you."

The Fool Who Never Fills

ARIANNA CALDERON & ARIA NICOLETTE TAN



Artist Statement

"This assignment was made from the personal impression of the emotion of 'Lack of Fulfillment.' This painting represents my period of depression as an overachiever where no matter how much she does, she will always be unsatisfied. Whenever I fall into this hole, I find myself relating to a man alone in the bar, hunched over and head hung over a cup of whiskey. The painting was born from the concept of this imaginary fool of a man I find myself sharing a lot in common with.

A cup of whiskey is often symbolized to be known as a 'sad man's drink,' and the clown we see is found to be in an ocean of it. The spilling of the cup of whiskey was to represent the full story of that man at the bar, where we will always find him every night in the same spot, drinking the same drink until empty, and watching as he awaits his next fill. No matter the amount of times we fill that cup, he will always feel as empty as he always has.

The clown theme I incorporated is a detail significant to myself simply because I love clowns. I believe clowns represent the idea of how no matter how much paint you hide behind, the truth will always lie under. Paint will wash off eventually. That's life and I hate it, so why not make a mockery of it."

~ Arianna Calderon



Shock Collar

FIDEL PEREZ

Artist Statement

"'Shock Collar' emerges as a visceral commentary on societal constraints and the electric pulse of conformity. The collar implies a jolt of awakening, suggesting the electrifying tension between societal expectations and individual autonomy."

Body Dysmorphia on Social Media

SOFIA ALBORNOZ

Artist Statement

"Since I was little, I have struggled with this mental health condition, and I wanted to create something that would create awareness and also tell people that feel the same way that they are not alone in this journey."



Sentir

SARA MENCO ARENAS

Sientes muy profundamente
Me dijeron una vez

A pesar de todo, ¿qué es sentir si no se siente así?
Evidente, palpable, y tangible
Tan genuino y sin orgullo

Al final de todo, a veces es un privilegio dejar latir el
corazón un poquito

Así te darás cuenta de que sigues vivo.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

You feel very deeply
I was told once

In spite of everything, what is it to feel if it's not felt that way?
Evident, palpable, and tangible
So genuine and without pride

In the end, sometimes it's a privilege to let the heart beat a
little

This way you'll realize you are still alive.

Author Statement

"I have always felt very deeply. I tend to immerse myself and reflect on my feelings for more time than I realize. But I never truly became aware of it until my best friend told me those exact words at the beginning of the poem: 'You feel very deeply,' and that's when it hit. Feeling is not something to be ashamed of or something to be brushed off. When we allow ourselves to navigate through how we feel, love, and appreciate one another, I consider it to be a gift."



Alluring Red Sight

ROSELINE JEAN-PIERRE

Artist Statement

*"The hue fills the room, guiding your eyes towards the piece,
alluring is the sight."*



Apples in Six Styles

ALIA YISKIS

Artist Statement

"Apples in Six Styles' is done entirely with acrylic paint on canvas. I aimed to capture six distinct painting styles using a single reference image of a still life that featured apples, an orange, and cherry tomatoes. A fruit still life is one of the most traditional painting subjects throughout history; I thought it would be fascinating to explore a still life using various techniques, colors, and brush strokes. The styles (from left to right, and top to bottom) are expressionism, pop art, realism, cubism, fauvism, and impressionism."

Tonkotsu Pork Ramen Bowl

ALIA YISKIS

Artist Statement

"Tonkotsu Pork Ramen Bowl' is a work composed entirely of fiber. It includes various yarn, needle felt, fabric, and paper straws (inside the chopsticks). The piece is meant to portray a sense of realism shown in the proportions and characteristics of the different elements, but also a sense of whimsy, through the color and texture. Ramen is a soul food and always makes me recall warm memories."



Between the Moon and Tide

CORA PADILLA CASTILLO

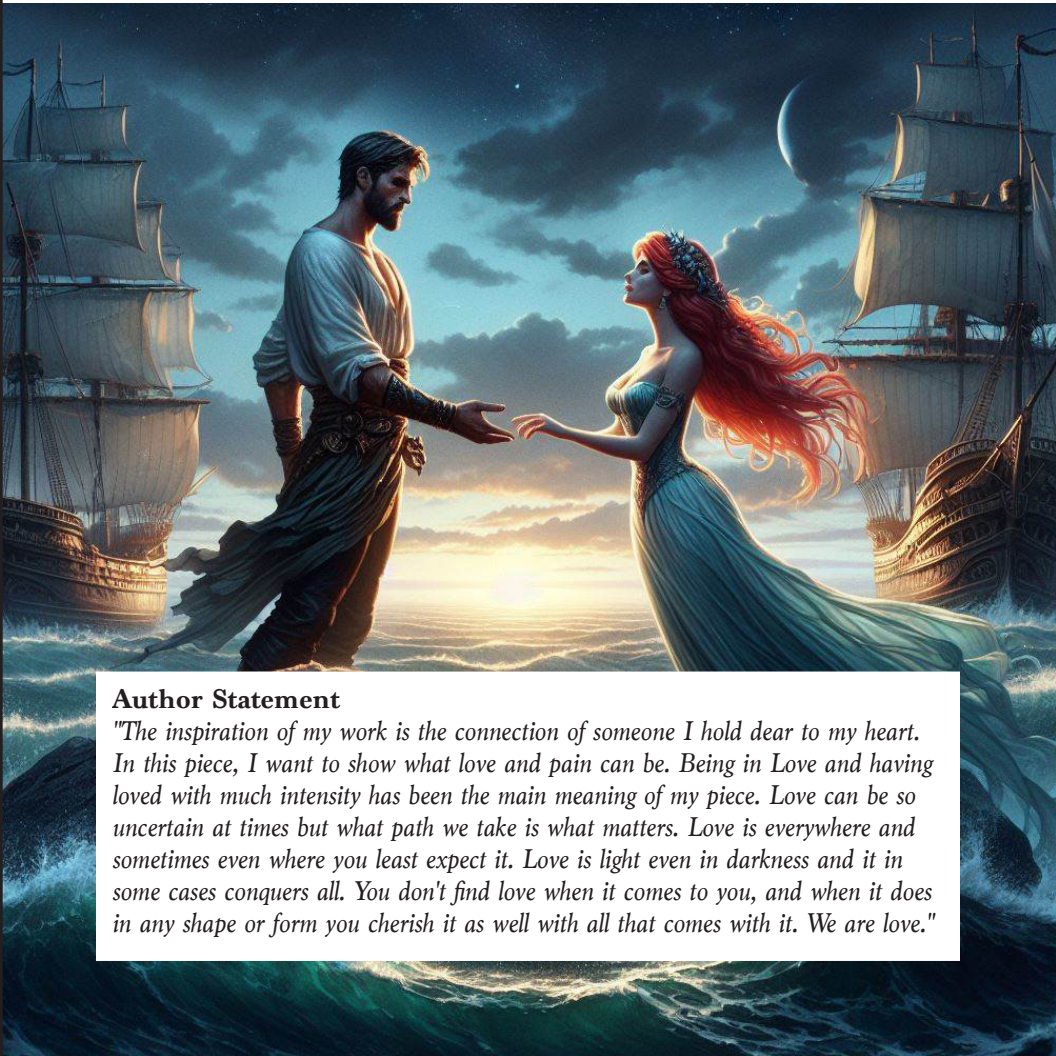
There once was a fearless sailor named Dinos who had thought he had lived and seen it all; he was known for his adventurous voyages and oceanic escapades. Yet he never believed the tales of the creatures that awaited under the sea. One night his ship decided to stop by an island for a few days where the crew would be able to rest a while from the sea. Dinos decided to explore as the crew slept on shore; as he walked through the island, he found a cave. As he walked towards the cave, he heard a beautiful haunting voice come from within, he glanced toward the water stunned he couldn't believe that the song came from a siren. He had heard tales of the creatures under the sea, but he never thought he would be encountered with one.

When the siren glimpsed at the sailor, she immediately swam under the water to hide. Dinos was mesmerized by her voice and asked her to stop hiding. Terrified but curious she slowly came up to the surface and revealed her face to the sailor. The siren's name was Cyra and she was radiant and ethereal, with hypnotic eyes the shade of deep blue and hair as smooth as silk, and her body glowed below the moonlight. Dinos had never seen a beautiful creature before, and she had never seen a human so up close. Her presence was alluring to the sailor, and he couldn't help but wonder what she was like, when they came close their energy felt magnetic.

Since then, the sailor stayed on the island a few days more, so he could visit the alluring siren every night in the cave. Their connection was instantaneous they talked for hours sharing their worlds, secrets, and dreams. Yet Cyra couldn't help not confiding in her beloved completely, she had heard tales of sirens and sailors facing betrayal. Dinos was convinced that his love was different from other sailors and that he would never let his precious siren be harmed and vowed to take her away from the island.

The sailor did not keep his promise the next day his crew packed their ship to venture to another island. Cyra saw as the vessel sailed from afar and as her heart broke into pieces she started to sing, and her voice echoed onto the tides. Dinos looked back and was heartbroken, he knew they could never be together the way they wanted to, so he decided to leave without saying goodbye. The sailor wanted to go back to the island, but it was too late—the ship had sailed way out at sea and the only thing he was left with was her memory.

Dinos soon felt cursed—he had realized what the true nature of betrayal felt like and there was no way to undo what he had done. The sailor decided to sail at sea 'til his last breath in the hope of finding the island of his beloved Cyra. Every night he talked to the moon and recited “By the power invested in me, by the skies, stars, and sea may my love come back to me.” Every night Cyra would swim into the cave and cry the sailor’s name and recite “My moon, my stars, my sun please light up the path and lead him straight to me.” Stories say that Dinos was able to find his way back to Cyra while other tales follow that they never found their way back to each other, cursed by their own love forever.



Author Statement

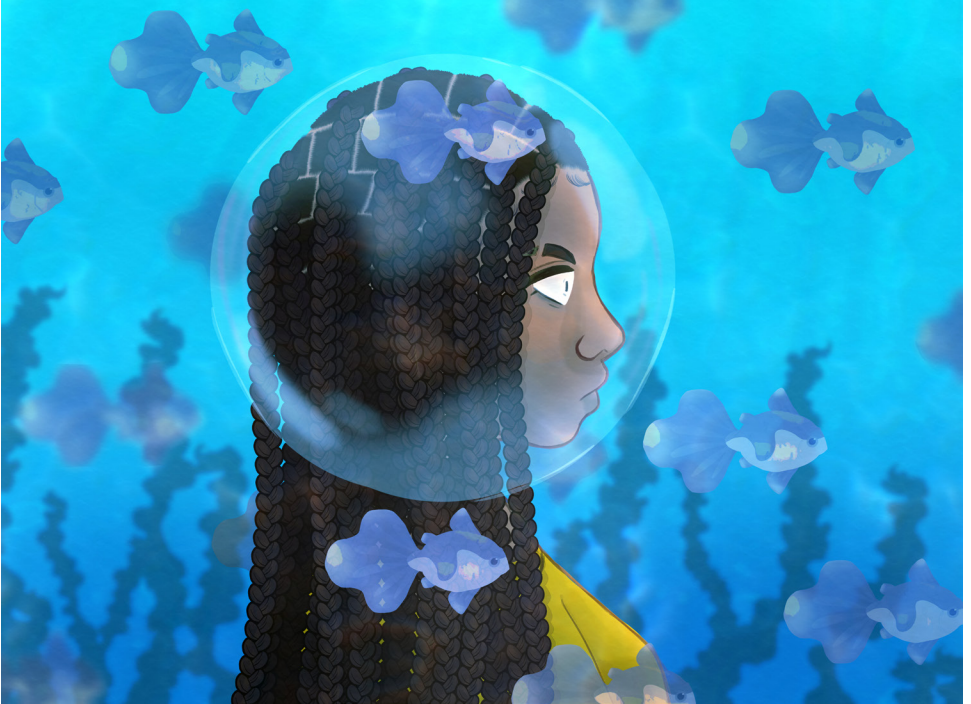
"The inspiration of my work is the connection of someone I hold dear to my heart. In this piece, I want to show what love and pain can be. Being in Love and having loved with much intensity has been the main meaning of my piece. Love can be so uncertain at times but what path we take is what matters. Love is everywhere and sometimes even where you least expect it. Love is light even in darkness and it in some cases conquers all. You don't find love when it comes to you, and when it does in any shape or form you cherish it as well with all that comes with it. We are love."

Staying in Your Bubble

YANICK VICTORIN

Artist Statement

"This piece came from how solitary I feel at times despite being surrounded by people. It's people that are moving on with their lives, while I'm stuck in my bubble."





Rani

PRATHA RATTAN

Artist Statement

"In creating this piece, I drew inspiration from my personal journey as a first-generation Indian American. Struggling to reconcile my dual identity, I often felt torn between two worlds and unsure of where I belonged. However, in recent years, I've come to embrace my Indian heritage wholeheartedly. Through this artwork, I sought to showcase the vibrant colors, rich culture, and profound beauty of India as a celebration of my roots. It's a representation of my journey towards self-acceptance and a tribute to the diverse tapestry of my heritage."



Mesmerizing Motion of a Carousel

DALIANYS CRUZ-ROJAS

Artist Statement

"The art of photography is the ability to showcase one's vision, capture moments, and create. Throughout my journey as a beginner photographer, I aim to showcase details of the natural world that often go unnoticed, incorporating dream-like elements that blend reality and my imagination. Using these concepts, I utilized long-exposure techniques to transform my photo into a visual experience reminiscent of a painting. Creating emphasis on the movement and embracing the vibrant colors showcases the intricate beauty of a carousel and evokes feelings of nostalgia, wonder, and adventure."

Meraki

ELENI V. ANGELOS

Artist Statement

"Meraki' (μεράκι) is a beautiful Greek concept that does not have an exact English equivalent. It's about putting yourself fully into whatever you are doing. It emanates passion, dedication, and thoughtfulness. My family is from Greece and growing up my parents put a lot of importance on working hard in what we were involved in. They encouraged us to explore a variety of interests and never judged what they were, but just asked that we put forth effort and love in what we did. This is something that has shaped me and shows up in my pottery. I feel like my love for the art and the joy I feel getting to create something with my hands helps me put my heart in each piece I make."





Dear Cuba

KAYLE MEDEROS

Author Statement

"In this painting titled 'Dear Cuba,' Kayle connects to her Cuban roots by depicting a street in Cuba. As a Cuban-American, Kayle has seen the dysfunction and chaos on the island and wanted to paint a calming and tranquil scene to contradict that environment. This piece is about the beauty and tranquility that can be seen amongst the chaos of life."

Winter Escapades

SONIA RAO

Artist Statement

"While hiking within the Rocky Mountains in June of 2023, I came across breathtaking sights such as the one in this photograph. While the photograph captures just a small part of the mountain, it does not do justice to the natural beauty that I was encompassed by in that moment of time. This brief moment of tranquility reminds one to pause and enjoy their surroundings rather than letting life simply flow by."



Conceptual Self-Portrait

TYRIANA WHITE

Artist Statement

"My piece, 'Conceptual Self Portrait,' serves as a visual depiction of my personality and interests. When deciding how to make this depiction, I chose to use a large afro as the focal point, as my hair is central to my identity as an Afro-Latina. Since my hair is very thick, it can hold items like pens inside of it, which inspired me to place objects representing my hobbies and interests into my afro. For instance, my hobbies of reading and drawing are represented by the book and paintbrush, respectively. By encompassing such details, I provide a peek into my identity."



Contributor Biographies

MAHIR ABRAR

Political Science, Shepard Broad College of Law

Hey there, I'm Mahir! I'm 19 years old and was born and raised in South Florida while my parents are from the southern beaches of Bangladesh. I've always enjoyed putting thoughts to paper in a way that was meaningful to me; I'll often make mental notes on how best to describe situations I see everyday in real life.

SOFIA ALBORNOZ

Psychology, College of Psychology

I am a freshman at NSU from Venezuela majoring in Psychology. I love to read, to travel and chocolate.

ELENI V. ANGELOS

Interdisciplinary Studies, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

I started doing ceramics few years ago as a distraction while going through some medical issues. I fell in love with the process and spent hours in the pottery studio improving my craft and creating art. I love that I get to take earth's materials and create something from it that people can use in their everyday lives. Ceramics uses all the elements – water, earth, air, and fire. It is an ancient practice and something I hope to keep growing and learning in.

JYLLIAN BROWN

Music, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Jyllian Brown, based in South Florida, is a third-year NSU student working towards earning her Bachelor's degree in Music with a concentration in Piano Performance. She specializes in providing piano accompaniment for vocalists in various music concerts, talent showcases, and musicals (Mamma Mia!) and working as an aspiring music director (Spellbound; Now. Here. This.). When she's not playing piano, Jyllian's time is devoted to the theatre arts as an actress (Gruesome Playground Injuries, The Mousetrap), technical assistant (Zombie Prom, The Dolls of New Albion, The Tempest), and now a sketch comedy writer!

ARIANNA CALDERON

Public Health, Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine
My name is Arianna Calderon but I enjoy going by Aries as well. I'm just a girl from New York who simply loves the idea of creation and storytelling. Making worlds of my own in my head and on paper or any media I can get my hands on has always been an escape-route for myself growing up as I'm not one who enjoys reality. The stress I feel throughout my days is my main drive behind my work, it's my natural form of constant inspiration I guess. I love the idea of clowns which is a pattern I often include in all my paintings, because I love the idea that something so playful and fun could have the face of a sad man under all that paint, and I see that as a great representation of life overall. Or I could just simply like clowns. I hope to continue making work to give people a chance to take a peek in my wicked mindset and get a warm welcome to my world.

DALIANYS CRUZ-ROJAS

Human Services Administration, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice
Dalianys is a freshman majoring in Human Services Administration at Nova Southeastern University. She is originally from Puerto Rico but moved to Florida at the age of 4. Throughout her life she has developed a passion for art, using her creativity to create pieces and capture moments in time with photography. One of her biggest inspirations has been her big sister who introduced her to the world of photography at a young age.

DIANA E. DANCEA

Computer Science, College of Computing and Engineering and Mathematics, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences
Diana Elizabeth Dancea is a first-generation college student eager to help everyone see the connection between STEM and the humanities! Currently a double major in Computer Science and Mathematics, with minors in Applied Statistics, Cybersecurity, and Political Science, she truly encompasses the term "interdisciplinary." In her free time, she enjoys reading and art, as well as writing her own poetry.

EISHMEL DORT

Psychology, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice

I'm Eishmel Dort or "Page One," my pen name. I'm a poet and songwriter studying Psychology here at NSU. My love of music and inspiration from my Physics teacher are the reasons why I began writing in the first place. This medium allows me to process my emotions, the moments that take place in my life, and the world from my perspective. I hope my writing resonates with your life in some way or you simply just enjoy the pictures I can put together. Thank you for reading!

LUCIANA MARIE FERNANDEZ

Art and Design - Graphic Design Concentration, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Luciana Fernandez is a Graphic Designer and Studio artist born in Miami, Florida, and raised in Venezuela. As a Graphic Designer, she leans towards marketing and branding. Her main focus is to create elegant, modern, yet playful designs that reflect the culture, personality, and values of her clients and herself. Luciana combines the beauty of art with technology to deliver simple and memorable pieces, focusing on line work, fine details, and meaning. Her compositions provide a pleasant and spirited environment through intricate color choices and balance. She constantly explores new ways to involve her surroundings and her Hispanic culture in her work while pushing her creative abilities to inspire others. Luciana continues exploring the world around her, testing new techniques and mediums that will expand her expertise and passion for the graphic arts.

SHALET JAMES

Neuroscience, College of Psychology

Shalet James is a recent graduate of Nova Southeastern University who grew up experiencing all four seasons in the state of Maryland before moving to South Florida to pursue a degree in Neuroscience with minors in Biology, Honors Transdisciplinary Studies, and Pre-Health. At NSU, Shalet worked as a College of Psychology and Farquhar Honors College Undergraduate Research Assistant and First-Year Experience Peer Leader, while holding

leadership positions in various organizations including Physician to Patient and NSU Fitoor. When she's not in a classroom or at an event, Shalet channels her love for creativity through the arts.

ROSELINE JEAN-PIERRE

Marine Biology, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

I am a beginner in digital photography and only really have been taking photos for less than three years. I wanted to explore digital because I originally began working with film cameras first. I started taking picture during 2020 with a Nikon F60 35mm camera. Learning the process of how difficult it is to produce good images is what made my transition to digital so much smoother. I have a through love for film and imagery, so I decided to explore it more through digital photography.

INCHARA KUMAR

Biology, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Inchara has been passionate about visual art since her childhood. Through pencil, watercolor, charcoal, acrylic, digital art, and even mixed media, she strives to not only experiment with colors, textures, and aesthetics but also push herself and her abilities as an artist. She can often be found scrolling through Pinterest for references, traversing through art galleries for inspiration, or admiring artists' works on social media. Some of her favorite artists include @gretlusky, @feefal, and @kts canvases on Instagram.

KAYLE MEDEROS

Biology, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Kayle was born in Miami, Florida where she still resides. As a biology student at NSU with minors in studio art and pre-health, she enjoys creating art to cope from the stress of life. Her medium of choice is clay. However, as the years have progressed, she has ventured out to use graphite, charcoal, and most recently acrylic paint in her art.

SARA MENCO ARENAS

Communications, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

I was born and raised in Bogota, Colombia, and I moved to the US in March 2016. I'm in my 2nd year at NSU and focus mainly on

my dancing and poetry. As a firm believer of the Christian faith, this is what has shaped me into the woman and artist I am today. When it comes to my writing, I love to say that I don't write for anyone other than myself. It is a way to convey my feelings as I grow up, as I learn to let go, and as I start to cherish the change. Follow @pol217_ on Instagram

CORA PADILLA CASTILLO

Marketing, H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship

I am the creator of *Digressions* Volume 20 "The Universe" / "El Universo" written both in Spanish and English. I continue to show my expression through writing, which has always been how I transmit the feeling of love and pain. Love is very important in my life as well as pain, which is what helps me transform and grow as an individual being. Change is important in my work since I am open to being active in that in my daily life. As I continue to grow in expressing my feelings through art. I believe this is one of the most beautiful ways to show love and light even when things are not.

JULIANNA R. PATALANO

Art & Design, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Julianna Patalano is a senior Studio Art major who has minors in Graphic Design as well as Folklore and Mythology. She was born in sunny South Florida and draws great inspiration from the local environment and culture as well as mythology and religion. They look forward to continuing to explore and learn through their writing and art. She hopes that her work serves as a reflection point for the audience, allowing experience and growth through creativity.

FIDEL PEREZ

Communication and Sociology, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Fidel Perez, a communication and sociology double major, is an artist whose work serves as a captivating exploration of self-discovery. Through the intersection of his academic pursuits and creative endeavors, Fidel navigates the intricate threads of human interaction, weaving a rich tapestry that reflects his identity.

SONIA RAO

Biology, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Sonia Rao is a Biology major with minors in Human Nutrition, Pre-Health, and Honors Transdisciplinary. Growing up, art has always been an interest for her. As a result she founded and led an art organization at NSU called Artistry. She believes that art can help bring individuals closer to one another. This can be done through various mediums such as literature and photography. Sonia is pursuing her goals of becoming a physician and hopes that her passion for art will help her connect with individuals in the future.

PRATHA RATTAN

Behavioral Neuroscience, College of Psychology

Pratha Rattan, a junior at Nova Southeastern University, navigates the intriguing intersection of science and art. Majoring in Neuroscience with a minor in Studio Art, she embarked on her artistic journey throughout primary school, experimenting with color pencil throughout high school before transitioning to acrylic paint in college. Her creations serve as both an escape from the rigors of scientific inquiry and a medium for unspoken emotions. Drawing from her Indian heritage, Pratha's work intricately weaves together cultural elements and personal experiences, offering a vivid portrayal of the human psyche through vibrant strokes of paint.

ISABELLA ROSE RISERVATO

Psychology, College of Psychology

Born in New York and migrated to Florida during the late COVID era, Isabella honed in on her artistic skills by pursuing a studio art minor and immersing herself in unexplored mediums. The origins of this piece start in Professor Lopez' Painting 1 class. The universal human experience of love was the driving force behind this creation. A belief in deep familial, romantic, and platonic connections is what makes life a special blessing, as emphasized in this painting. Isabella is in the Dual Admission program at NSU for marriage/family therapy and plans on continuing her graduate education at NSU.

LINDSAY SCHERER

Marine Biology, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences, Farquhar Honors College

My name is Lindsay Scherer and I am a freshman majoring in Marine Biology. I am in the Dual Admissions Program for Marine Science, as well as the Farquhar Honors College. I was originally born in New Jersey, but I've moved around frequently and I currently live in Bermuda. I am planning to get my PhD in Marine Biology and work with coral reef conservation and restoration efforts around the world. In my free time, I love to scuba dive, drink coffee and read books!

ARIA NICOLETTE TAN

Marketing, H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship

Aria Nicolette Tan spent her formative years on an island off of the coast of Malaysia and moved around the United States frequently. Her time in areas of high cultural diversity inspired an attraction to the simplicity of the human experience. We are interconnected, and a common theme in her generation is personal identity and how that binds us to the world. Her artistic motivation is to represent a journey that is accessible to anyone.

RACHEL TAYLOR

M.A. Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Rachel Alexandra Taylor is a 25-year old writer currently pursuing her Master of Arts in Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media with Nova Southeastern University. With a Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies and Marine Biology she has a background in the natural sciences and art, both. Rachel is passionate about sharing truth with her readers through story telling to grow advocacy for bipartisan green conservatives, holistic conservation, history, and marine science. Rachel often indulges herself in the art of performance, poetry and illustrations, expressing her insatiable creativity outpouring from the heart. She hopes that with autonomy of your right hemisphere, you will enjoy peering into the lens that can be defined as no other than, the interpretation of Rachel's little collection of memoirs.

JOCELYN VEGA

Legal Studies, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences, Farquhar Honors College

Jocelyn is a Presidential Scholar Senior, majoring in legal studies with a triple minor in Spanish, Global Engagement, and Honors Transdisciplinary Studies. She is pursuing law and hopes to focus on Criminal and Immigration Law. Jocelyn has always dreamed of having her written work displayed.

YANICK VICTORIN

Art & Design, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

I've been creating art for about 8 years now. Oftentimes whenever I create something, it tends to be a reflection of myself. Whether it be my mood, experiences, desires, etc., something about me is always there. I think it's important to put a little bit of you into everything you make.

TYRIANA WHITE

Graphic Design, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Tyriana White is majoring in graphic design with a minor in marketing. She was born and raised in South Florida and has had an avid interest in art since she was four years old. Her avid interest motivated her to pursue a job in the art field. Her current career goal is to be a graphic designer. Her primary art mediums include traditional and digital art.

MARILYN YANES-PEREZ

Art & Design, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Marilyn Yanes Perez was born in South Florida. She is a senior with a keen eye on her future, she aspires to pursue a Master's in art therapy. She is driven by her personal impact with specific learning disorder, idiopathic intracranial hypertension, and psoriasis on her mental health. Marilyn has discovered art as her sanctuary and uses her art as therapy. Marilyn finds solace and expression in her creations, channeling emotions she struggles to verbalize.

ALIA YISKIS

Biology, Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Alia Yiskis was born in Encinitas, CA, and spent her childhood in Las Vegas, NV. She is primarily a digital artist who specializes in semi-realism, expressionism, and illustrative styles. She is currently a senior biology major with minors in studio art and pre-health. Through her artworks, she finds new ways to combine her love for art and science. Though digital art is her main medium, she has experimented with painting, fiber works, sculpture, and animation. Her works often focus on integrating fantasy and reality, and the fine line that distinguishes them. Alia believes her style is constantly adapting, but consistently incorporates bright colors, varying texture, and a sense of whimsy. Digital commissions can be purchased from her website, <https://aloxiaart.carrd.co/>.



WANT MORE DIGRESSIONS? Follow this QR code for access to past issues at <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/digressions/>. If you are an NSU student, you can even submit your own work for our next issue!



GenAI Statement

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has arrived in higher education amidst much anxiety and skepticism about its impact on learning, the production of effective texts, and the displacement of creative workers. While we recognize these concerns, *Digressions* has always been a space where we are called to "Imagine. Create. Inspire.", and each year the journal innovates in some way.

This year, GenAI was not used as part of the editorial selection or revision processes of *Digressions*, but the four fairy tales published within this volume have each had an AI-generated image appended to the end to frame the author statement. Fairy tales are, as Dr. Santos points out in this volume, built on the "universal elements of human life," and these elements can be communicated in images as well as words.

The generated images are reproduced below. The GenAI tool used to generate the images was MS Co-Pilot Designer, and the prompts given were excerpts of the student-written fairy tales themselves. We hope that readers see these attempts to supplement student work in *Digressions* using GenAI as part of our commitment to imagine how authors and artists can collaborate with GenAI to continue to inspire us to explore the universal elements of human life.

