HUNTINGTON ARTS COUNCIL

Nightmare on Main Street 2026

Main Street Gallery

Artist Biographies & Statements



HAC'S programs are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

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About the Juror:
Gina Ienopoli:

Artist Prompt: Folklore from various cultures shares captivating stories during gatherings or at bedtime, passing down moral lessons to each generation. Native Filipinos tell tales of mythical beings such as the Tiyanak, a deceptive shape-shifting creature who mimics a crying baby to entice compassionate individuals deeper into the jungle, and the Diwata, beautiful guardian spirits of forests and mountains who can either bless or curse someone based on their treatment of nature. The Tikyanak stories warn against rashness and emphasize the dangers of the unknown, while the Diwata stories advocate respect towards the Earth and one's environment. In your own world or using your own culture, create a mythical creature that inhabits its own environment and convey a backstory that imparts a lesson, incorporating visual elements to explain this throughout your work.

Artist Bio: Gina Ienopoli, born in 1997 on Long Island, New York, pursued her studies at The Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC from 2015 to 2019. Skills ranging from graphic design and product photography to mural painting and film photography, Ienopoli's eclectic practice explores the surrealist realm while adhering to a dark aesthetic. The artist's stylistic choices reflect her ambition to portray dark, moody themes in a vibrant or confrontational manner for the viewer. During her time in school, she was shortlisted for the Sony World Photography Awards for her notable piece, "The Idealist," a portrait of a woman blowing out a birthday candle while having icing for hair. This photograph was showcased at Somerset House in London, alongside works from other esteemed photographers around the world. Additionally, her photography series titled "Abandoned" and the photograph "Feeling Alive," which explores urban decay throughout desolate buildings, has received numerous recognitions over the years from the Adobe Design Achievement Awards, Juxtapoz's High Art, Holy Apostles Gallery, and The Patchogue Arts Council. Since 2022, Ienopoli has been residing and working in New York City, concentrating on freelance projects and her small punk merchandise business "Ghouligans".

Delina Afewerki



Astral Guardian
Mixed Media, 18" x 12"
Half Hollow Hills High School East
NFS

Artist Statement:

When I started working on this art piece, I wanted to try experimenting with a new art style and different media than I'm used to, and I love the way it came out. Though I mainly used alcohol markers, there were plenty of other mediums that I was able to use in small amounts that really tied the whole piece together. After reading the Juror's quote, I was inspired to create this artwork of the mythical, dragon-like creature that invoked feelings of curiosity and wonder in its audience. The creature, protectively guarding the moon within the endless expanse of outer space, was also very slightly inspired by Greek mythology, which is something I wish to learn a lot more about in the future.

Talia Aguirre

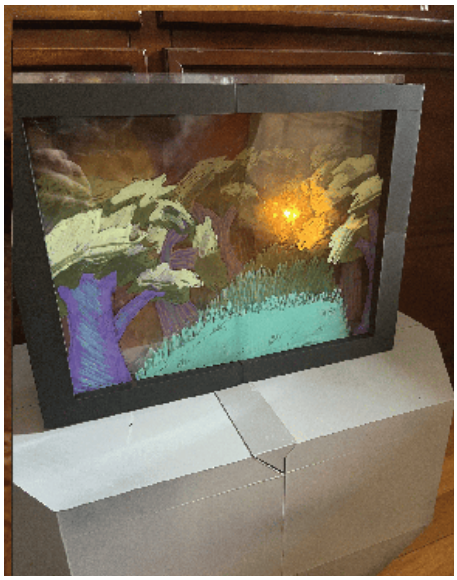


Eyes on the Prize
Graphite & Color Pencil, 22.5" x 15"
Northport Senior High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

Rather than creating a creature from scratch, I wanted to pay homage to a monstrous part of myself. From a very early age, I have been fascinated and attracted by the macabre. At times, my infatuation with death has led me to become numb to the experiences of my life. Depicted, a woman's eyes are purposefully covered, or blind to the experiences of her life while her mind's eye gazes infinitely towards what lies beyond. A monstrous part of myself will always gaze towards death, at times, with longing. As fascinated as I am by the concept, stigma surrounding, and infinite possibilities of one's existence after this life, it is vital that I do not lose sight of all that it has to offer.

Samuel Allison



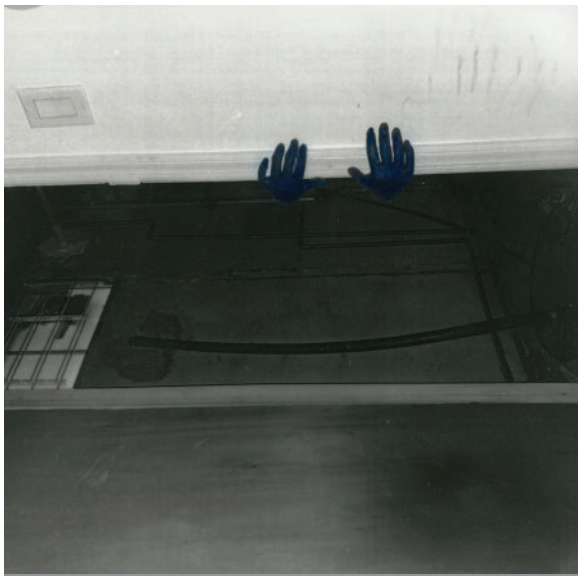
Solder Day
Mixed Media, 9.5" x 13" x 3"
Half Hollow Hills High School East
NFS

Artist Statement:

"On Solder Day, doors boarded up, the people shun the light.
Yet one creature roams the woods, yearning for a bite.
When you wander, Solder Night, despite the warnings spun...
You're gone by next morn's dawning. You're eaten by the Sun."

When brainstorming for this project, a certain excerpt from the Juror's quote stood out to me. "Folklore has always used mythical creatures to pass down lessons about nature, caution, and respect for the world around us." This is what led to "Solder Day." This specific media was chosen to highlight the forest-y setting, as well as to accentuate when the two entities take notice of the other for the first time; that split second "oh no" feeling right before disaster. The posing of the Sun leads into this as well. Simultaneously, the posing was meant to insinuate an aura of unearthliness about his person, mirroring the tale seen above.

Talia Almaliah



The Man is Coming
Darkroom Photography, 8" x 10"
Syosset School
$50

Artist Statement:

As a film enthusiast, I took inspiration from Netflix's recent adaptation of The Whisper Man. I immediately thought of the creepy folklore created from this story when I heard the juror's quote. I specifically pulled out the words, "moral lesson", "warn", "dangers of the unknown", and "imparts a lesson" as they go hand-in-hand with the story. The Whisper Man is a story about an infamous child-killer from which the children make up a rhyme about to warn each other about the whisper man which gets passed down from generation to generation. The rhyme goes like this, "If you leave a door half open, soon you'll hear the whispers spoken. If you play outside alone, soon you won't be going home. If your window's left unlatched, you'll hear him tapping at the glass. If you're lonely, sad, and blue, the Whisper Man will come for you", which the lesson here is to teach kids safety rules, close your windows and doors at night, and don't play alone unsupervised. For my photos specifically, I was particularly inspired by two scenes- one where the main child was talking to the whisper man and he slipped his blue latex-glove covered hands through the mail slot of the front door. The second scene is where the whisper man talks to the child from a tree outside the child's window and you can see his creepy latex-glove covered fingers wrapped around the tree trunk. The "you'll hear him tapping at the glass" line also was an inspiration for my second photo.

Madeline Altman



The Tempered Vent
Color Pencil, 12" x 15"
Syosset School
NFS

Artist Statement:

The Tempered Vent is a dangerous, yet rewarding component of nature. When travelers explore her terrains, they have the choice to mistreat or respect the habitats that lay in her peripheral view. When her natural home is misused and not cared for, she erupts and impacts all nearby, whether or not they caused the outburst. When her resources and natural beauty are respected and maintained, she can provide structure and support with her solidified magma. Her abilities form a bridge between weather events and human emotions, reflecting the impact of external conflict or nourishment. Just like the creatures from the Filipino and Tiyanak cultures, the Tempered Vent teaches a moral lesson, which from an external perspective is to treat others with respect, and from an internal perspective is to control your temper, because it may impact those around you.

Elianna Attah



The Great Fortune of The Baccoo
Poster Paper, 11" x 14"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

Do you choose Good Fortune or Chaos? The Baccoo is a mischievous dwarf-like looking creature from Guyanese Folklore. This weird beast is usually kept inside a sealed bottle otherwise, if let out they can be very chaotic. They are known to shape-shift to scare people with bad visions, torment and destroy property in houses and cause illnesses or possess people if mistreated. However to fulfill their satisfaction you must feed them milk and bananas consistently. In exchange if you keep them happy they can bring good fortune and wealth.

I chose this media after hearing stories and tales spoken amongst family members describing things that they have heard mysteriously happening to people in Guyana. It seems like the moral they were trying to teach is you should always be nice to people not just when you want something in return, like good fortune.

Rhiannon Aull



Bedtime
Markers & Color Pencil, 9" x 12"
Stimson Middle School
$50

Artist Statement:
This drawing shows the fears that children have at night. Many kids are afraid of something under the bed or always watching them.

Schaila Kathrisse Bandong



Mushroom Medusa
Ink on Paper, 9" x 12"
Valley Stream South High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

My artwork, "Mushroom Medusa," has an underlying message of the pain and misunderstood story of the goddess Medusa from Greek Mythology. I feel Medusa is an icon for all women who stood up for what she believed. Sadly, she was cursed for the rest of her life for doing just that. My artwork is inspired by Gina Ienopoli's "A Prosperous Home" because like Ienopoli, I too chose to go with a theme inspired by fake-lore. Greek mythology is essential the same as Filipino folklore in that both tell stories that pass down morals for every generation that follows.

I was also inspired by Ienopoli's color scheme and created my artwork in black and white too. I chose the medium, black ink to work in because I feel it gives the work a spooky, textured look, perfect for an art exhibit based around Fall in New York, specifically "Spooky Season."

Keira Barrie



Showing True Colors
Acrylic Paint, 19.5" x 15.5"
Northport High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

What inspired me from the Jurors quote was the mention of the shape shifter. Specifically "a deceptive shape-shifting creature who mimics a crying baby to entice compassionate individuals deeper into the jungle". I wanted my piece to tell the story of a girl in her own habitat, with herself, and she is taking off her fake identity to reveal her true form, a monster with its own plans. I used acrylic paint since the layering of the paint makes a very nice "messy look" that my creature is reflecting. Along with the story of the Tikyanak, I wanted my piece to also be a sort of a warning, to exemplify the horror of the unknown.

Hannah Bieler



Medusa
Digital Photography, 20" x 24"
Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School
$100

Artist Statement:

For this project, I chose the Greek myth of Medusa, a figure often remembered as a monster with snakes for hair who could turn people to stone with her gaze. I was drawn to her story because she is both powerful and tragic, which gave me a lot to work with visually. In my photographs, I wanted to focus on the darker and more mysterious side of her character while still showing strength and emotion. To me, Medusa represents the way someone can be feared or misunderstood because of how others choose to see them. I wanted my images to make her feel like more than just a monster and instead show her as a complex and memorable figure.

Damian Campos



Deus Ex Machina
Mixed Media, 32" x 21.5" x 11"
Valley Stream South High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

Deus Ex Machina, or "God from the Machine", is a piece inspired by several deep meanings. The Machine, represented as a dragon, is a manifestation of greed, and the consequences that come along with it. Since the industrial age, the machine has been a figurative device representing the destruction consequential to our growth. Technology grows rapidly as does tradition, and as time passes, this dragon begins to coil itself firmly around society. This dragon is deceptive, it reveals itself as something shiny and new, yet its destruction will remain blissfully ignored until all is devoured beneath its grandeur.

Ian Cangemi



Desperation for Blood
Acrylic Paint, 12" x 9"
Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School
NFS

Artist Statement:
My artwork is a representation of the harsh reality of big business management systems and the unfair exploitation of workers. In large businesses, workers receive undesired work shifts and face tough conditions. In return, on many occasions, they receive limited pay regardless of the hard work they dedicate their lives to help their companies succeed. While this takes place, the large business owners that benefit from the profit refuse to give their workers deserved pay. Being in the black cloak, the Demonic Being represents the management of large businesses. He is painted to perfection using a variety of different brush stroke techniques, and a large palette that resembles dark and shadowy conditions. His presence echoes through the night from an unsettling, foggy setting. His teeth are stained with blood, which represents that large business management forces take advantage of many people, often showing a history of victimizing workers. The man who is tightly grasped by the powerful Demonic Being represents just another victim who dedicates his life to hard work, only to receive minimal dividends that struggle to keep him financially stable and crush his confidence as a worker. In the painting, the worker is being crushed by the Demonic Being mercilessly, despite the veins swelling on his head and hands. The Demonic Figure has intense desperation for blood. Although this painting ties to business management, it is also intended to teach the "moral lessons" of how everyone should be fairly treated anywhere... not just within a business. When being passed down for generations, the painting could represent the crushing power of disrespect and how it affects people negatively. The juror's quote was inspiring because it pushed me to go beyond my limits and put to life a mythical being in a scene that teaches an important lesson that can be passed down for generations. And that is exactly what I did. From a once-blank canvas, I carefully chose to paint this scene because I knew that I could create a palette that works together to bring the scene to life in a meaningful way. It is a nightmare that belongs on Main Street.

Tess Carey



It's in the Eyes
Oil Pastels, 14" x 11"
Harborfields High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

This piece explores the darker side of human emotion and how hard feelings can sometimes change a person into something completely different. I was inspired by the shapeshifter in the jurors quote, how it would portray a human baby instead of what it really was. My piece is similar in a way that it changes it's appearance through the blink of an eye but it's more fueled by its emotional state. The contrast between the softer, more natural eyes and the darker, monstrous ones represents the struggle between who we are and what our emotions can turn us into. I wanted to show the "monster" that can come out when things are difficult and that everyone has a bit of a dark side, but it becomes most powerful when we allow that monster to control our actions rather than facing the truth.

Sophia Carnesi



The Hierophant
Digital, 49.17" x 34.17"
East Rockaway High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

From the simple pull of a card one is able to read themes of the past, present, and future. All that is to be or has occurred lies in a deck following the tale of major and minor arcana, sparing no detail and holding no bias. In the current climate of the world, many stories go untold or spun in deceitful ways, a case that cannot be applied through the deal of the deck. The cultural traditions of the cards have circled through various regions, trickling down generations for eons. The stories told in my pieces are ones that reflect real life, even if created through the pull of a card. In my two submitted pieces, a card represents a true tale, such as corruption of religion or the invasion of women's privacy.

Nicholas Coiscou-Dragotta



No Escape From Death
Color Pencil, Ink on Paper, 12" x 9"
North Babylon High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

I was ultimately inspired to incorporate Northern American folklore creatures such as the Jackalope. Jackalopes are mythical creatures that resemble a jackrabbit with antlers. They often are described to run very fast, which plays a role in my piece. The main message for my audience is to understand that time, and death are inevitable, and that nobody can "run from it." The Jackalope's antlers are shaped as an hourglass surrounding the person attempting to escape what seems like an endless forest. As he continues to run, he is put under a curse that slowly turns him into nothing but a pile of bones, hence the "half human, half skeleton" look. As a toddler, I used to believe that everyone lives forever, or at least there was some sort of continuation of life after death. But as I grew older, I slowly fell into the reality that death is a natural part of life, and that time will continue to progress, second by second, until it arrives.

Angela Colin



Ghost Kids
Color Pencil on Paper, 12" x 16"
North Babylon High School
NFS

Hira Danish



Ay mis Hijos!
Paint, 18" x 12"
Valley Stream North High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

The legend of La Llorona tells of Maria, a loyal woman who married into wealth. Despite her devotion, her husband grew distant, eventually abandoning her for a younger socialite. Discovering his betrayal, a heartbroken and furious Maria drowned her two sons in a river before taking her own life. Now, her spirit eternally haunts the waters, wailing, "Ay, mis hijos!" In search of her lost children. This haunting folklore, rooted in Aztec tradition, serves as a cautionary tale. The broken crown symbolizes the hollowness of her husband's wealth, while the torn fan represents the destruction of her family. Ultimately, the story teaches us not to judge a book by its cover. Wealth and status do not guarantee integrity, and outward appearances often mask internal truths. Just as Maria's husband seemed successful but proved destructive, we must look beyond the surface to understand true character.

Danielle de Masi



The Watcher
Fashion, 60" x 24" x 12"
Northport High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

The Watcher is a mythical creature that I created, inspired by the Filipino folklore stories described in the jurors' quote. Particularly, I was intrigued by the idea of the unknown and how folklore utilizes mysterious beings to teach lessons. My use of fashion and sewing allowed me to represent the age of these folktales and show how they've been passed down through countless generations. The many eyes featured on this piece represent the Watcher's ability to see everything, even when people think no one's looking. They serve as a warning that our actions still have consequences and an impact, even when we believe they go unnoticed. The tangled rope alludes to those who have suffered the consequences brought about by their choices. Through these elements, I brought the Watcher to life, showing how folklore can utilize the unknown to communicate meaningful warnings across generations.

Cadence Dondero



Amongst Many
Acrylic & Pen, 16" x 20"
Huntington High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

The Púca, or Phouka, a creature from Irish and Celtic folklore, is a legendary shapeshifting spirit believed to take on the form of any beautiful and alluring creature. I was always intrigued by the idea of this spirit still taking forms today, in lesser expected ways. Through costumes, and the people hiding behind them.

Resembling the Púca, we use costumes to transform into something other than ourselves. To disguise, play, act, and inhabit another identity. For a moment in time, the everyday self gives way to something more magical, imaginative, and strange.

With empty eye sockets, masks covering any recognizable features, and identities hidden under layers of fabric made disguises, the work puts to question what it means to recognize someone as truly human. The Púca became a symbol of this uncertainty for me. A creature that can appear as something familiar while concealing something entirely different underneath. By hiding the figures human features, my art asks the question: if appearances can be changed so easily, how do you know who, or what, is under the mask?

Emily Federico



Unnecessary Evil
Mixed Media, 18" x 24"
Island Trees High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

"Unnecessary Evil" is a watercolor and colored pencil piece, featuring a Japanese deity known as an Onī, or Demon, being turned down at an interview. The Japanese kanji translates to: "Sorry, but I cannot hire you."

Historically, demons are created to invoke fear and display evil—however, what happens when the natural world has enough fear to go around? A demon loses its original purpose, and is left to find its place in a world desensitized by the horrors of a modern era.

Selena Jiang

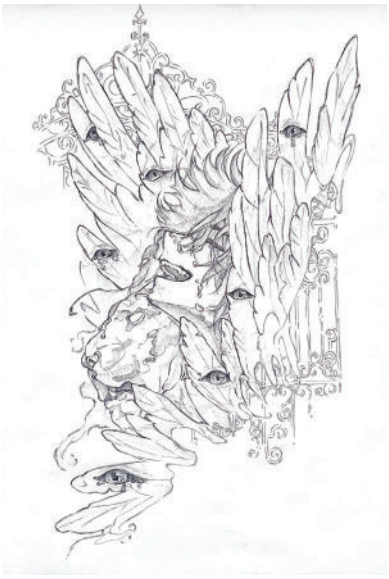


Astray
Digital Art, 9" x 12"
Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

When you think of a fairy, the first thing to come to mind would most likely be a tiny, whimsical being with fairy dust swirling around. In traditional folklore, however, fairies are depicted as much more dangerous and typically human-sized, though they could shift their appearance at will. My artwork illustrates the predictable mischievous behavior fairies would indulge in, like leading travelers at night astray. They use magic or illusions to lure them off their path. My artwork portrays a physical manifestation of a fairy carrying this out, as if they're physically present there to misguide a traveler. Although it's done for amusement for the most part, this also serves as a warning against being blinded by superficial means.

Anna Jenkins



Guardian of Sacred Space
Pen & Ink, 18.5" x 13" x 0.06"
William Floyd High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

My artwork portrays elements that convey the importance of faith with a clear and peace of mind. The mythical creature displayed represents a cherubim; often presented to be guardians of sacred spaces (tracing back to ancient Near Eastern Mythology), in which I chose to display the mind represented by the clear gate in the background and the mixed emotions of the creature. I chose the media of pen and ink so that I could display the grunge mood that best fit my theme, as well as my comfortability in using the medium. The part of the Juror's quote that inspired me was the very beginning where she states "Folklore from various cultures shares captivating stories..". This quote influenced me to incorporate parts of my own culture into my composition, my creature, and my cares and theme for the piece. So all in all, this artwork shows me as a person, my beliefs, and my interests in a new and eerie way.

Aiden Lee



The Sagae
Digital, 8" x 10"
South Woods Middle School
NFS

Artist Statement:

The Sagae is a Mythical creature based off of the korean fire wolf, Bulgae, and a lion (saja in korean). They are Lions who were the pride male of a giant pride. They were powerful, but greedy. They overworked their own pride and took all the food for themselves. Then they were sent to Gamangnara (a korean kingdom of darkness), by the king of that kingdom. The king saw potential and such great power in them. The king made them protect the kingdom forever, and never let them leave. The artwork shows a Sagae that has been in the kingdom for a long time. The message of the story of the Sagae is to warn people of greed, and never to take too much for yourself. I was inspired by Korean culture and the tiyanak from the jurors' quote to create a terrifying and malicious creature while also having a lesson.

Bella Li

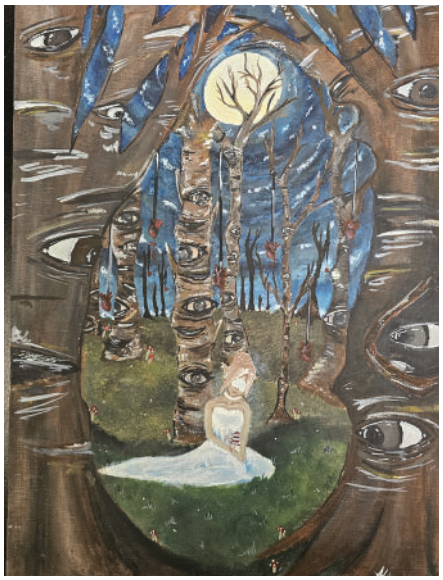


Dinner for Two
Watercolor & Oil Pastel, 9" x 12" x 2"
John F. Kennedy High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

In Thai mythology, Krasue are usually beautiful women, cursed after death with endless hunger. By day, she lives amongst the rest of her village. But by night, she leaves behind her body, save for her head and viscera, seeking to satisfy her craving for blood and raw flesh. She hides her estranged body away during her hunt, preying on livestock and even sleeping persons, but if it is found and destroyed, she will die painfully when the sun rises. I chose to paint this scene with watercolor to understand the light and darkness of the drawing, and then rendered the rest of the painting with oil pastel. Oil pastel gives the blurry, almost dreamlike effect that I wanted. I wanted to capture the moment a Krasue is caught thieving a pig, but the outcome of this encounter is up for interpretation. The juror's quote tells that a culture's mythology imparts a lesson, and that made me wonder about the meaning of this folklore. Perhaps the Krasue warns listeners to be wary of someone's true self, that no matter how pretty, they may possess a vicious side yet unseen.

Anastasia Lin



Eyes That Wander
Acrylic Paint, 12" x 16"
Plainview Old Bethpage Middle School
$125

Artist Statement:

"Deceptus" People called her. She was once normal too like everyone else. Until one night her own husband deceived her and left her with nothing but grief of love and emptiness. Now she feeds on those souls who deceive others and run without a second thought. People of the village cry and run to her begging for her forgiveness and revenge. So no matter where or when she'll seek the justice for ones who felt like her that night.

Grace Lin



Stone and Spirit
Pen & Color Pencil, 8.5" x 11"
Syosset High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

My artwork explores two powerful figures in Chinese folklore that represent different sides of protection and change. The guardian lion represents protection and stability. Specifically, the male lion holds a globe to protect the outer world. Meanwhile, the white snake is an ancient spirit who transforms into a human woman to experience genuine love. Her story represents the change that comes from within.

Wilhabelle Louisjean



The King of Stories
Acrylic Paint & Pens on Canvas, 16" x 20"
Deer Park High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

My artwork is a cartoon-style painting inspired by the Haitian folklore of Anansi. He is the king of stories, and the "trickster". The clever spider known for using intelligence and cunning to overcome challenges. He can be summoned by people who have a gift for story telling and will help them become the best storyteller they can be. He comes from the Ashanti people of Ghana. They brought their stories to the Carribean, leading to various versions of his story told through west Africa and primarily Jamaica and Haiti. I chose Anansi as my subject due to my own love of story telling and because his stories show how creativity, wit, and cleverness can be just as powerful as strength.

I used a green and black color palette to create a mysterious and playful feeling. I placed Anansi in the center of the painting to make him the main focus. He often comes to those he interacts with as a spider- well a man with spider like features. Sometimes he is a spider wearing clothing or one with a human face. From what i collected, in human form he usually wears a black fedora with a red spider sign in the center. Sometimes he has a white mask covering his eyes. Other times he wears a heroic dark blue suit with a cape. I believe this is because in traditional myths, Anansi traded with the sky god Nyame to bring all stories and wisdom down to earth for everyone to share, showing him in a heroic spotlight. His staff lays in the background. I wanted to make it look like its glowing in order to show his power. Anansi hold much power among both mythical and human worlds. His stories provided psychologically relief for slaves during the slave trade. He represented rebellion and was a symbol of resistance which i wanted to display im his mischievous expression. I desired for his half human, half spider body to emphasize how he exists between both human and magical worlds. I chose a cartoon style because I wanted the character to be expressive while also being mysterious. I always wanted to try something new since cartoon drawing and human faces aren't my forte. My goal was to capture his cunning personality and show some of his characteristics through his facial expressions and body movements.

The juror's quote that inspired my work was " Folklore from various cultures shares captivating stories during gatherings or at bedtime, passing down moral lessons to each generation". It resonated a lot with Anansis main purpose, to pass down not just hope but also moral lessons on how children shouldn't just back down. In the painting his head is held high and hes looking straight out you. Depending on how you interpreter, hes ready to either tell another story, challenge another god, strike rebellion and hope within you, or inspire you to tell your own story.

Alana Mahmud



Dream Crawler
Graphite, 9" x 6"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

I was inspired to draw this since Arachnids terrify me. I hate how they have eight legs and eyes because it makes it appear scarier than they really are. I added eyes to my monster in order to show how scary they appear. She appears in the shadows when children stay up too late, and is attracted by darkness. If they are not sleeping, she wraps her victims up in webs and suffocates them in their sleep. She then stabs them with her long legs. The medium I chose to draw with was graphite pencils. I smudged and shaded in order to create a more realistic effect as well as add a creepy atmosphere.

Ugonna Okwu



Fae Snack
Graphite, 12" x 20"
Valley Stream North High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

Centaurs are brutes a manifestation of the worst of mankind. Fae represent innocence and purity. The Centaurs beheading of the fairy represents the loss of innocence in world and how people are quick to become the worst version of themselves.

Sharmia Oladipo



The Spirit Beneath
Color Pencil, 18" x 20"
North Valley Stream High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

The Spirit Beneath explores my Nigerian heritage through my own surreal interpretation of Nigerian water-spirit folklore. Inspired by stories of water spirits such as Mami Wata, I created a fictional creature that represents the unknown dangers hidden beneath something that appeals beautiful and familiar. The creature pulling me underwater contrasts with the children happily swimming in the background, showing how the same environment can feel joyful to one person and threatening to another.

The juror's prompt inspired me to create a mythical creature with a story and lesson. I used colored pencil and white gel pen to create a bright, dream-like underwater world filled with exaggerated colors, bubble, and patterns. Through this piece, I connected my Nigerian heritage and folklore with my own imagination and perspective.

Karin Pan



Cursed Doll
Chalk, 10" x 13"
Syosset High School
$50

Artist Statement:

My first message behind my Tomato painting is how similar butterflies are to vampires. Many people don't know that butterflies can actually suck fruit. Up close it may seem freaky but soon you'll be distracted by their beautiful wings. The next draig of my cursed doll, it may seem alive but it's may just be a doll. Or maybe its a child trapped or her body is transforming into a doll. A bit like Frankenstein but overall a innocent child who has died too soon. I choose painting due to my experience behind it, I have painted since young and it has been my most familiar medium. My doll drawing was with chalk and a bit of color pencil, these are not common materials I used in my daily life but I wanted to practice and give it a go. I am happy with my work and how it turned out. In Chinese culture some say butterflies are actually souls able to cross over the under and over-world. While dolls I have hearn many stories of children possessing dolls and their hair actually growing in the doll. But alas these are all folk lores, or are they. They may have significance and I certainly believe so.

Sophia Pane



A Trick of Light
Digital, 16" x 20"
Half Hollow Hills High School East
$25

Artist Statement:

The underlying theme of my work is how myths are created remembered and passed from one generation to the next. I chose to depict a woman creating a shadow puppet of a bunny. The bunny's shadow transforms into a wolf. This contrast between the innocent bunny and the large threatening wolf represents how stories can change as they are passed down. A simple story, image or warning can be retold by parents, grandparents and children until it becomes something larger and more frightening than its original meaning. This connects directly to the juror's statement about folklore being shared during gatherings and at bedtime and how these stories pass lessons down through generations. I was interested in the idea that folklore does not always remain the same; as people retell stories, their fears, beliefs and imaginations can become part of the story itself. The bunny represents innocence and the original harmless idea while the wolf represents how that innocence can be transformed through storytelling into something threatening. The woman creating the shadow also represents the role in creating and continuing myths. I chose painting because it allowed me to create a strong contrast between the warm light on the woman and the darkness surrounding the wolf's shadow. The dramatic lighting makes the wolf appear larger and more powerful, than the bunny itself emphasizing how a story can grow through repetition. Ultimately my piece explores how a simple image or idea can become a myth through generations of storytelling, changing shape as each person adds their fears, interpretations and imagination to it.

Jamie Pietsch



Nobody is Truly Ever Trapped
Acrylic Paint on Canvas, 14" x 11"
North Babylon High School
$200

Artist Statement:

Nobody wants to be trapped and destined to one fate for there entire lives. Its misery, depression, and jealousy. The theme behind my artwork is that there is always a way to change your fate. In the painting it shows a singular gargoyle trapped to sit on the ledge of an old castle for eternity. There is a light coming out of his chest to symbolize his desperation to escape followed by his one reaching arm to show his attempt to leave. The light is the gargoyle finally being able to break free and choose his own fate. The main thing that stuck out to me in the jurors statement was the passing down moral lessons to each generation. I really wanted my work to show that even if you believe you're stuck, a light can shine your way to your freedom.

Camila Rosales



I Have No Mouth But I Must Scream
Watercolor & Ink, 12" x 9"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

My artwork is about a girl who is very hard on herself to be someone she isn't. She is very insecure about her looks and got bullied for being herself, so she changed for everyone. But now she doesn't know who she is, and she screams in silence and misses her old self. The sad thing is, she can't go back, and a lot of people go through this, like me, but then I realized its way more better to be yourself and never change for someone if they can't see how amazing of a person you are. That sucks to be them. You keep being you and people who bully you for that they changed, so don't follow their lead. Love yourself no matter what. The coolest thing about you is being yourself and you don't need nobody to like you or respect you or love thou if you can respect yourself and love yourself then that's all you need.

Emma Rosenfeld



Elijah's Cup
Darkroom Photography, 8" x 10"
Syosset High School
$144

Artist Statement:

Elijah's cup is an essential part of jewish childhood. In this image, the door is held open for Elijah, who is told to bring the messiah when Elijah finally comes. My mother and father filled his cup of wine to the brim, and my mother would distract us while my father drank the cup. The open door in the image also represents hospitality and making your home open and welcoming to others, especially on Passover. The shadows on the door are of a tree when the light of the car passes, showing the light that Elijah would bring and the Tree of Life. The cup is on top of a piece of cloth, positioned so the first thing Elijah would see is the cup. When you welcome someone into your home, you offer them a drink. Folklore from cultures are passed in gatherings or told to teach a lesson. This story allows for me to connect to my heritage and teach me the importance of hope, tradition and hospitality.

Marchello Sellitto



Josh (Pumpkin Head)
Marker, 9" x 12"
Valley Stream North High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

My story follows Josh, a kid who is bullied because of his appearance. During the fall, he carves a pumpkin to cover his face and wears it to school. After being bullied during gym class, Josh reaches his breaking point and runs away. He eventually becomes lost in a strange, foggy forest where he encounters a shadowy figure that attacks and bites him. Josh later discovers that the "forest" is actually an illusion and a trap for the shadows' prey. After the attack, Josh begins to transform, growing taller as the pumpkin slowly becomes part of his head. Meanwhile, the police and his parents search for him, but he is never found. Josh remains trapped in the illusion forever. The shadow creatures were inspired by folklore, while the story itself was influenced by Little Red Riding Hood.

Ronnie Suri-Finn





Forest Frights
Sculpting Clay, 11.75" x 11.75" x 14.5"
North Babylon High School
$65

Artist Statement:

The underlying message is to not wonder into danger or places your not supposed to go, in my art piece a girl has wondered into the forest where she encounters a tree monster. I have thought of possible stories for the monsters background and for how the encounter might go but i would like to leave it ambiguous so it can tell its own story. The part of the jurors quote that inspired me was to use our own minds to create a piece that would have more than a story behind it but also a lesson and i was excited to create my own monster with clay that i thought added a cool 3D element as you can really see how the girl is paralyzed in fear as the monster acknowledges her.

Kayla Tsai



Pure White Deception
Watercolor, 10.63" x 7.68"
Harborfields High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

Pure White Deception is a mythical being that has no home and travels wherever people live. Ordinary people cannot see it. It wears a pure white robe and has no clear gender, appearing almost innocent and sacred.

The creature survives on deception. It carries beautiful apples and offers them to people who are willing to lie or deceive others. The apple represents temptation and choice. The creature does not force anyone to take it; people choose whether to accept it.

I wanted the creature to look beautiful rather than frightening because deception does not always look dangerous. Sometimes, it can appear innocent, comforting, or even pure. The white robe represents that false sense of innocence, while the beautiful apple hides what is underneath.

Every lie becomes nourishment for the creature. The more people deceive, the stronger it becomes.

The creature does not create deception. We feed it ourselves.

Leah Vanel



Overthinker
Charcoal on Paper, 12" x 9"
North Babylon High School
$100

Artist Statement:

Thoughts can be scarier than any monster or creature. In your thoughts its you and you alone. Overthinking can cause people to obsess and worry about minor situations. What if every time you overthink there was a monster that taught you overthinking leads to one thing: cracking and withering away?

Kaya Wagner



What Lurks Through the Innocent
Acrylic Paint on Canvas, 14" x 11"
North Babylon High School
NFS

Tommy Wasylyshyn



Embers of Light
Watercolor, 17" x 13"
Walt Whitman High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

Taking inspiration from Slavic folk depictions of the Firebird, the Embers of Light tells a story of how light was spread on Earth. Using watercolor paint, I depicted a bird made of fire that flies through the sky, dropping embers onto the ground below as it goes. As the embers fall, Earth is introduced to light. Additionally, this piece represents the duality of fire itself, showing that the falling embers can burn down an entire forest, or create light and prosperity in a village. In the Juror's quote, the legend of Tiyanak and Diwata encouraged me to research tales from my culture in search of inspiration. This led me to creating my own backstory of how light was spread on Earth and how it can create both prosperity and destruction.

Sofia Watson



Stygian Owl
Color Pencil, 9" x 12"
Stimson Middle School
$50

Artist Statement:

My artwork shows 5 Stygian owls at night on a hike. It may look like they have red eyes but that is really just the reflection of the blood-tissue found in their eyes. Before this fact was known many people thought that they were evil and referred to them as Devil's Owl. When I was younger I went on a hike with my mom and we saw a Stygian Owl. Both me and my mom were freaked out because we didn't know it was supposed to have red eyes. When we got home we looked it up and found information on the Stygian Owl.

Tammy Xie



Face the Light
Watercolor, Ink & Brush Pen, 9" x 12"
Plainview Old-Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

When I first read the juror's quotes, I understood that I wanted to incorporate cultural elements of folklore from where I'm from into my artwork. From the dragon, buildings, color red, to the clothing of the main character, they are all motifs to significant symbols in Chinese culture. The theme that exists in my piece was a story of tyranny and the dragon is meant to represent oppression against others. However, the girl who stands up against the dragon is meant to show resistance and defiance against the sea dragon's rule. The red in this case burns to show not only the anger of the dragon, but also the brave determination of the girl who stood against the creature; that is the moral lesson behind my piece. I got this idea mainly from the quote that stated, "Folklore from various cultures shares captivating stories during gatherings or at bedtime, passing down moral lessons to each generation." As I believe this piece can portray that theme.

Nathalie Zhang



To Dress A Skull
Digital, 2114 px x 1292 px
Plainview Old-Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School
NFS

Artist Statement:

My piece is inspired by the Baigujing (the White Bone Demon Lady) from the classic Chinese text Journey to the West, exploring themes of deception, the illusion of appearances, and the weaponize of innocence. Rising from the body of a woman who died, the Baigujing is both a tragic spirit and a beast, using different forms to deceive people and survive. In the original text, she offers poisonous fruit to the travelers. Only Sun Wukong, the Monkey King sees through the disguise and strikes her, but she leaves a fake corpse and escapes underground. The monk Tang Sanzang scolds Wukong for harming an "innocent" person, and she comes back two more times once as an old woman then as an old man before finally being defeated by Sun Wukong. As a Chinese artist who grew up with Journey to the West, I chose the Baigujing because her story is a piece of my own cultural heritage that beautifully mirrors the juror's theme of shape shifting folklore that warns against deceptive appearances. I was inspired by the juror's mention of the Tiyanak, a "deceptive shape shifting creature who mimics a crying baby to entice compassionate individuals deeper into the jungle" to "warn against rashness and emphasize the dangers of the unknown." Much like the Tiyanak exploits human empathy, the Baigujing uses disguise to manipulate others, which directly influenced my composition: I depicted her shape shifting nature across four faces; her form as a woman, an old man, an old woman, and a young girl to visually trace the progression of her illusion. The pale, spectral blue tones are cold and otherworldly, while the vibrant red apple held by the young girl acts as a symbolic piece of bait, visually reinforcing that danger often hides behind the guise of innocent temptation.

Charlotte Ziegler



Oblivion
Watercolor & Pencil, 9" x 12"
Cold Spring Harbor Jr./Sr. High School
$30

Artist Statement:

My piece, Oblivion, inspired by ocean mythology. The ocean is absolutely fascinating to me and I am often spending my free time learning about marine sciences. Watercolor used to give flexibility and movement to my piece. The siren lurking underneath the sailboat represents the terror of not knowing what's beneath you, or what could be ready to get you at any moment.