Huntington Arts Council

Nightmare on Main Street 2026

Online Gallery



Artist Biographies & Statements

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Gina Lenopoli | Nightmare on Main Street Juror

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 Biography:

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".

Shahzailb Ahmad



Fake Smile
Graphite, Ink, Colored Pencil, 12" x 9"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School

Artist Statement

My concept for this artwork was a mask that twists a person's perception. It changes their mindset about the things that are happening to them. In my story, I thought of a boy who was bullied. He found this mask that twisted his mind - Now, he found happiness in the negative things that were happening to him... but he also found joy in causing pain to others who harmed him. The lesson is that you shouldn't bully others, because the actions you commit can come back to harm you. When making this artwork, I used graphite, ink, and colored pencils to emphasize the contrast between the darkness of the mask and the lightness of the emotions.

Afrin Ahmed

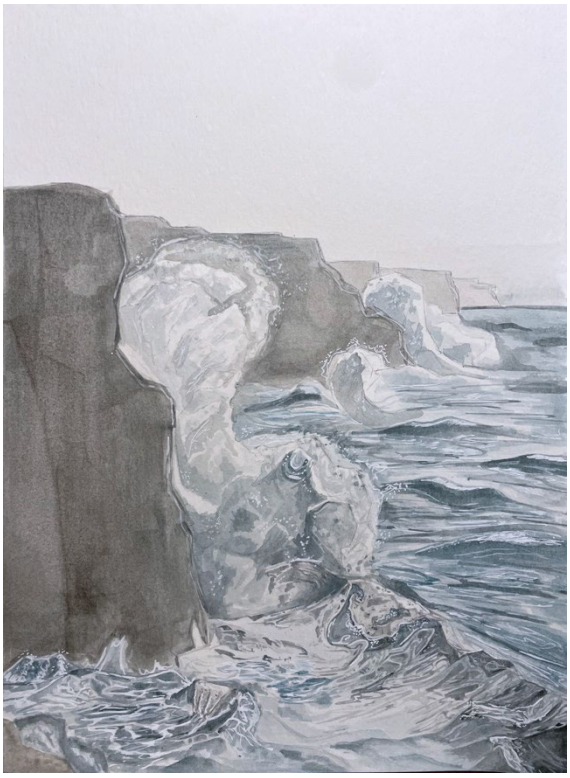


Grim Playground
Photography, 10" x 12"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School

Artist Statement

In the days of old, back before the first humans took their initial steps, the world wasn't the way it is today. Shadows moved, hiding red-eyed beasts within. They hid in the underbrush, in between tree branches, and concealed under leaves. They were called Kora, and their only goal? To shadow the whole world in a never-ending darkness. Fields of gold fell away to obscurity. The inhabitants of the world withered and died. But one race remained, the fae of the Otherworld. Pixies tried rekindling some sort of luminescence. Fairies fought the Kora head on, refusing to let go of the universe they were born to protect. But eventually, their efforts meant nothing. The Kora consumed all light with a simple touch. All hope for a new day was lost as the world fell into an eternal night. On one particularly hot day, a ray of sunshine somehow broke through the dense clouds. But one spark of radiance was all that was needed. A brilliant flower broke through the dull, faded grass, and from it bore a new fairy. This fairy was unlike the others, as it had a soft glow surrounding it. The fairy protected the new flora with this same glow, and no darkness could breach it. The light grew greater and greater, cutting through the clouds, bringing more light into the dark forest. The Kora quivered and retreated back to their hideaways, no longer able to walk in broad shadow. The glow grew stronger and stronger, refusing to dim. And from one breath of light, a whole new day was born. Sometimes the shadows still move, they look around with their gleaming, red eyes. But the Kora never again tried to regain the sweetness of victory over the light. Their defeat was far too bitter to even think about encompassing the world in darkness again. And the fairy that started it all? It's still out there, keeping the shadows in place, and making sure the light never fades away again.

Kellen Anderson



The Waves of Parthenope
Watercolor, 9" x 12"
Huntington High School

Artist Statement

My art represents my Italian heritage. My dad's side of the family is from Sicily and it has been a huge part of my life. I chose the myth of Parthenope for my piece, although it is a Napoletana myth, because it represents my overall Italian heritage from all over Italy.

Mariana Aroniadis

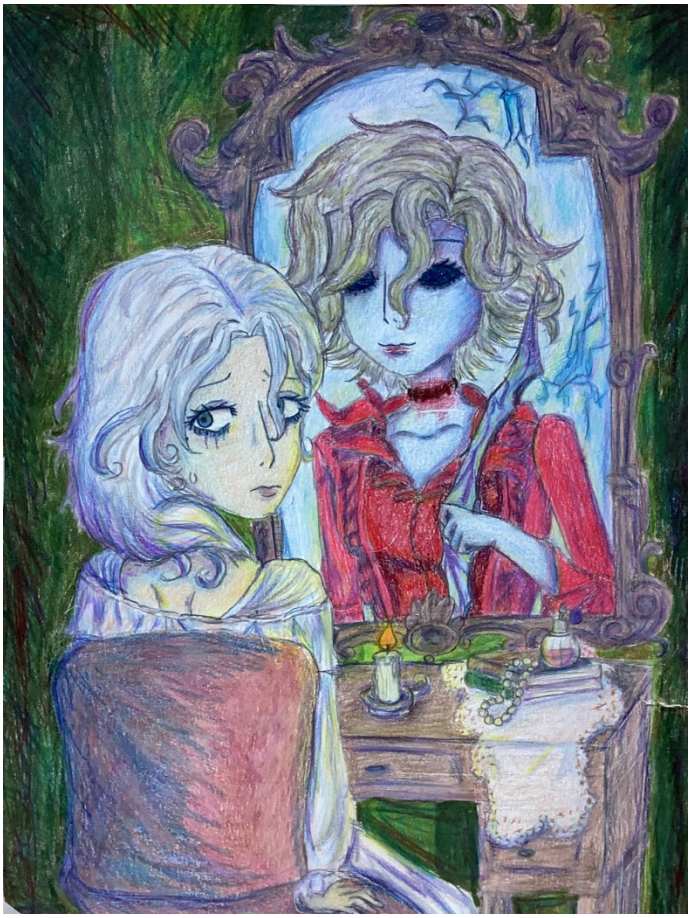


What More Is There To Fear
Charcoal, Colored Pencil, Graphite, 12" x 9" x 1.25"
Northport High School

Artist Statement

This work of art portrays a young girl staring off into the shadows of monsters and the darkness yet she still remains full of life and color, portraying the ideal sense of innocence. While staring into the darkness around her, the only thing clear is the woman in front of her who represents the girl as her innocence grows further away with age. Using charcoal I was able to bring out the shadowy background that portrays uncertantity and mystery while in contrast the pencils used for the young girl and the woman made them stand out an become the focus of the piece along with the colored pencil giving the young girl another layer of childlike wonder. When reading the jurors quote, the ideas of stories children are told when they are young sparked an idea of how those stories change as you grow. Stories start from monsters under the bed, as shown by the monsters in the background, to being scared of monsters who are real and the reality that forces people, mainly young girls, to grow up and sacrifice their innocence. The monster I have created in this art isn't the shadowy figures in the back like many would think who represent the mythical creature and fictitious evil in stories, but it is the monster reality teaches you about when those bed time stories become reality.

Kayleigh Augello



Lady in The Mirror
Colored Pencil, 12" x 9"
North Babylon High School

Artist Statement

Some of us fear the future for what awaits us, while others fear for what they will become. Bloody Mary is an infamous tale which may have struck fear into all of us at some point, myself included. I wanted to put a spin on the classic Bloody Mary tale, the foreground woman seeing what awaits her future upon looking into the mirror, looking back with a fear-stricken expression. She is not pleased.

Isabella Ayala

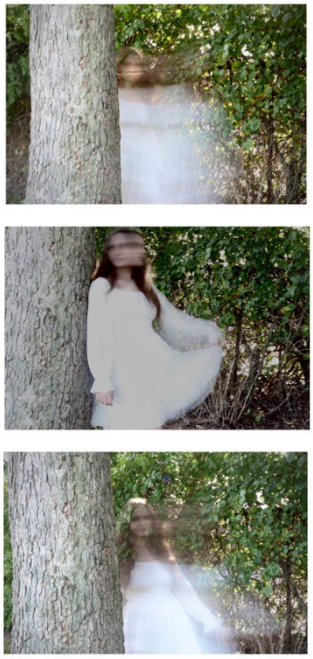


The Lurker
Pencil, Watercolor, Colored Pencils, 20" x 15" x 1 mm
William Floyd High School

Artist Statement

My work is inspired by old folklore tales where a woman is so envious and vain that she takes other people's skin/body parts to remain youthful. I wanted my main subject, which is the woman in my work, to look disfigured and frightened as she looks at the audience like they're her next victims. I wanted to make the woman look like she was lurking in a forest waiting to haunt someone like in my life where I'm often haunted by the idea of remaining beautiful like the woman is. I wanted to show how woman change and morph themselves in to something entirely different from who they are to fit in beauty standards. That's why the woman is shown with inhuman body parts with parts of her body having sewn in more human body parts. The woman also has a broken mask that shows how she hides her true face because she doesn't find herself beautiful even though her true self can still be seen by others. I also wanted to make my work look like a dream or at least not fully reality to show fear is something that doesn't have to be physical but rather something emotional or in peoples subconscious. I want my piece to show my perspective on parts of womanhood that maybe a lot of others can appreciate and relate to.

Kaylee Balkon



A Spirit Passing
Digital Photography with slow shutter, 7" x 15"
Half Hollow Hills East High School

Artist Statement

My work looks at the idea of the ghost as something that exists between being seen and being forgotten. I was inspired by traditional folklore, surrounding spirits and apparitions, specifically the image of a ghost appearing briefly before disappearing again. The motion blur in my photographs creates this uncertainty. The figure is clearly present, but her movement makes her seem almost unreal. I chose photography as my medium because the camera allowed me to capture movement and light in a way that makes an ordinary person appear supernatural. The white dress, forest setting, and blurred figure work together to create the feeling of a spirit haunting a familiar place.

Sabrina Baronoff



The Dragon's Lair
Watercolor and Marker, 9" x 12"
Cold Spring Harbor High School

Artist Statement

I chose to paint a Chinese dragon to connect my culture with the Halloween theme. The dragon is flying around and inside the jack-o-lanterns.

Kate Beinlich



The Giver
Colored Pencil, Oil Pastel, Alcohol Markers, 14" x 11"
Smithtown High School West

Artist Statement

In my own mythology, the alien creature in my drawing is called the Giver. It is a mysterious alien being that lives in a hidden desert where rivers have disappeared and the remains of people and animals are scattered throughout the landscape. The alien carries a large fish which represents life. Even though the Giver inhabits a dry desert, one wonders where the fish came from. The Giver is presenting this mystery fish, in a dessert a fish can be nutritious food for survival. The gravestones throughout the background represent people from previous generations begging one to ask if the Giver is a friend or foe, and to beware the hand that feeds you. Like traditional folklore told around fires or at bedtime, the story depicts an alien, the Giver, who symbolically communicates a lesson, beware the hands that feed you. Look closely to see if they are friend or foe by checking your surroundings.

Leah Blumkin



The Swamp's Gaze
Mixed Media, 19" x 24"
Plainview Old - Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Liza Bray



All Seeing
Acrylic Paint, 16" x 20"
William Floyd High School

Artist Statement

The muse behind this artwork is a seraphim angel, these angels are seen to be christian folklore, and are meant too look scary and intimidating. Their most remarkable phrases being "Do not be afraid" or "Fear not". The media of this painting is Acrylic Paint, I chose this medium because it is the medium i enjoy the most, and it was the best medium to use to execute the idea i had for this painting. A quote from the juror that inspired me "Bless or curse someone based on their treatment of nature". This quote specifically was inspiring because that relates a lot to the seraphim, and seraphim angels tend to act based on your faith, and how you behave from a religious standpoint. This artwork is heavily focusing on Christianity and Catholicism. As someone raised in a partially religious family, religion has always been a topic of interest for me, and learning about it has always fascinated me. So when i started to create artworks, creating one that in a way felt like my style, and also heavily based back to my culture, felt almost like a necessity.

Gemma Brewster



Dragon of Weather
Acrylic on Canvas, 11" x 14"
Harborfields High School

Artist Statement

My artwork represents a dragon or further shown as "Shenlong" meaning dragon in Mandarin Chinese. Shenlong is a water dragon that interacts with the weather and water. I made this media using acrylic paints on a blank canvas. This artwork portrays how the dragon can control the sea as there are big waves crashing into rocks and dark skies. I chose this media because I felt that it shows a well understanding of how the dragon can create dangers or calm weather. The blue hues of the dragon demonstrates how the dragon connects with water and the weather as the shades swiftly blend with the hues of the sky and the water.

Justin Brito



Spooktober
Pencil, Sharpie, 18" x 12"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School

Artist Statement

What inspired me to do my drawing was October coming up, the spookiest month. It inspired me to draw something related but also have a somewhat lesson/creative aspect to it. I chose to draw a Jac-o-lantern-humanlike creature that watches people who wander off without friends or family at Halloween night and abducts them. It sets an eerie and scary tone that gives a lesson about how kids, teens, even adults shouldn't wander off where no one can see them. Its very dangerous not only on Halloween, but also every other day, because, it could happen in real life. I got my Jac-o-lanterns head from a similar drawing, and his body from a photo of a man wandering with a light.

Charlie Brodlieb



Underground Creeper
Colored Pencil, 8.5" x 11"
Cold Spring Harbor High School

Artist Statement

I enjoy watching scary movies with my friends, so I decided I wanted to draw our favorite movie to watch.

Sophia Carmel

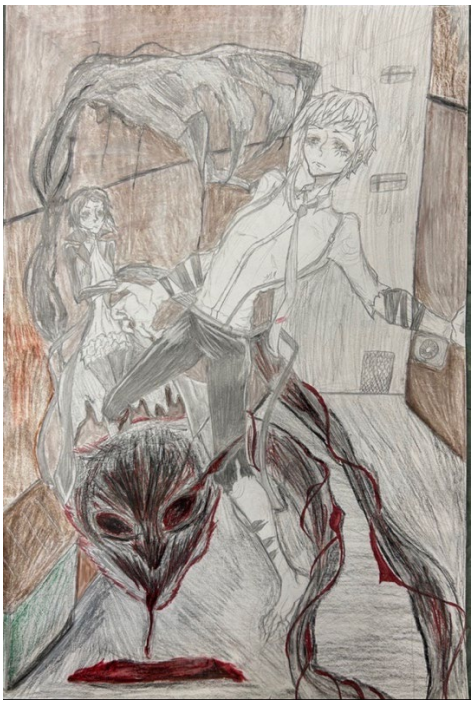


Behind The Face
Photography, 16" x 20"
Half Hollow Hills East High School

Artist Statement

Inspired by the idea that monsters are "sometimes the quiet, familiar faces we see every day," I made my own calm face the nightmare instead of building a creature. I layered my portrait over a photograph of a tree lined street so the branches grow through the skin and become part of the scenery no one notices. The skull resting against her cheek is like a mask I've just taken off, showing that what is hidden is never far from what is shown. I chose black and white to strip away comfort and leave only shadow, texture, and my direct, unblinking gaze. I blended two separate images into one, the way a nightmare blends the familiar with the frightening, and asks the viewer: who have I stopped really looking at?

Jazmin Castro



Shin Sokoku
Painting, 18" x 12"
Valley Stream North High School

Artist Statement

Atsushi Nakajima, an ability user who can transform into a weretiger, once believed his ability was a curse rather than a gift. After joining an agency, he is sent on his first mission with Junichiro to confront thugs in an alley. However, they encounter Akutagawa, a dangerous ability user whose ability, Rashomon, controls the fabric of his clothes. During the fight, Akutagawa severely wounds Atsushi, ripping off his leg and leaving blood covering the alley. Junichiro passes out, leaving Atsushi struggling to survive. As Atsushi remembers the cruel words of his past abuser, he realizes that his worth is not determined by how useful he can be to others. Therefore, Atsushi learns, "Your past trauma does not define your worth, and true strength is found when you choose to protect others despite your own crippling fears."

Isabella Chavez



"A Creature of The Heart"
Painting Media: Acrylics and Oil Paint, 30" x 24" x .5"
Half Hollow Hills East High School

Artist Statement

Anxiety can inhabit anyone, some feel it as a prickle on their skin, a quicken of their heart, a pit in their stomach; a gash on their back. That's what my work conveys. The feeling or crippling anxiety, the creature that feels like eyes gashing their way through your back, settling in a sharp uncomfortable sensation that feels like the eyes of others live in your skin. The frames surrounding the body in my project, an arm, a face, an eye. The face is what shows anxiety first, the eyes is where it settles, and an arm is what you need to pull you out of that moment. A creature like that can be a cursing or a blessing— it depends on how you treat it. Anxiety can motivate you, show you that whatever it's eating at matters, or it can eat at you until you're bleeding. Bleeding from your back. While creating the work, i wanted to make anxiety something that can bury itself into someone, and with a gash on a back, it felt most comfortable. The big area of a back, sticking itself to the spine of whomever it's filling— making everything else in your body react. Its a feeling of the unknown— a feeling that is unidentifiable because it's different for everyone and not everyone can explain that feeling. So i painted it.

Joseph Chen



Forbidden Monkey's Paw
Digital Photo, 7" x 11"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

The Monkey's Paw, a short story created by W.W. Jacobs, is about a family who receives a strange mystical mummified monkey's paw that only grants one wish for three different individuals. However, it is not like the typical magical genie lamp we all know and love. The paw grants their individual wish, but is manifested through tragic or ironic consequences. The story explores how interfering with fate can lead to unintended consequences, reminding us to be careful for what we wish for. I captured the story through photography by utilizing shadows, leading lines, and contrast between black and white. These elements helped create a mysterious and grim atmosphere that represents the small, shriveled hand and the danger surrounding it.

Cherish Cole



Out of Mind
Acrylic Paint, 16" x 6"
William Floyd High School

Artist Statement

Mental Health — Finding Light in Darkness

My artwork explores mental health and how people can experience darkness while still finding moments of beauty, hope, and light. I used dark colors and deep reds to represent difficult emotions, while the white and yellow details represent hope and positive moments. The patterns and hidden details represent the thoughts and emotions that can be going on inside someone's mind, even when others cannot see them.

Makayla Cortes



Face Taker
Traditional drawing with Marker and Pencil, 15" x 20"
William Floyd High School

Artist Statement

The life lesson of this mythological creature is to be your true self, as if you don't, this creature will make your identity into the newest entry for its collection of masks. I chose this medium since I wanted to go for a more oddly shaped figure than could be possible with something like sculpting. I wasn't inspired by the quote as much as I was inspired by the eerie atmosphere of the art. I wanted to make something that wasn't just some pretty lady-like figure who takes your name or drags you underwater with songs and such. The quote made me want to make the lesson a bit more visible in the design. Some creatures like shapeshifters show their lesson in their form, and mine does as well, dawning a mask of its own. This creature uses the identities of its victims to lure liars into the woods forever.

Mackayla Cusimano

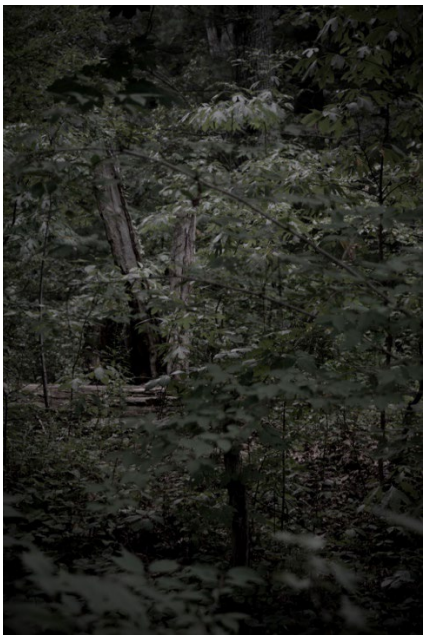


Fear Is Controlling
Colored Pencil, Acrylic Paint, 12" x 9"
North Babylon High School

Artist Statement

I made a piece of a spider-creature taking control of a surrealistic person. The theme of my piece is that fear will control you if you let it. You can see in the drawing that the person is not fighting back and in a way is letting the spider-creature control it. The work of Gina Iepoli and mine are very similar in many ways, we both tend to use a lot of dark colors in our work, we both often draw non-human creatures and more. Seeing her work was like seeing a version that I could become and it was very inspiring.

All-Mahdi Dewji



Astray
Photo, 16" x 20"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

Leshy is a supernatural spirit in slavic folklore. That was my inspiration for this project. I heard this folklore really recently. This gave me the idea to take a photo to capture something that relates to this. I captured this photo in Stillwell wood park while I was wandering the park. Leshy's goal was to protect animals and plants that lived in the woods. Leshy would do this by misleading travelers by shape shifting, calling out to them and so much more. As I was editing my photo with Adobe Photoshop I used hue/saturation to make the photo darker overall to add that nightmare effect. I used a vignette effect to darken the edges of the photo to make the photo a bit immersive. I used selective color to make the greens a bit more noticeable because then the photo would be all black and white.

Alysha Diaz



When I Stare, I See And Feel Black.
Kresha.art Digital Drawing Platform, 30" x 30"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School

Artist Statement

The underlying message/ muse for my work is the thought of many versions exist of this "said" person in this drawing (aka the creator of this piece) and in this drawing the character in blue is the drawn embodiment of all those versions, feeling rather distant and torn off. The embodiment knows that something is stopping them from being free, knowing that they're being watched but they don't know who or what it is. The Figure that is watching over the embodiment is staying far yet close, knowing that with they're eyes, they have the power to stop them from that freedom. So the embodiment is staring off into the distance, unsure of what is watching them and then the Figure, watching and "limiting". I chose this media because I am very familiar with this app and I feel like I can express my creative ideas well because of how versatile it is. A part of Juror's quote that inspired me was the part of "shape shifting." I've always been fascinated with the idea of changing forms and becoming essentially someone or something else. And so, I applied that with the fact of "the different" forms embodying into one.

Mayte Diaz



The Weight of Tradition
Illustration Board, 9.1" x 9.1" x 0.1"
Valley Stream North High School

Artist Statement

This piece is inspired by my culture and the traditions I was fascinated by and grew up hearing about since I was a kid, where women were the main focus of the celebration and could spend the entire night dancing until sunrise. I wanted to capture both the beauty of these traditions and the exhaustion that can exist beneath something so enchanting. The colors, jewelry, feathers, and movement represent celebration, pride, and cultural identity, while the woman's lowered head and tired expression represent the physical and emotional weight hidden behind something extraordinary. Her sadness is not meant to reject my culture, but to show that traditions can hold many emotions at once: joy, pride, exhaustion, memory, and sacrifice. Beneath the colorful surface, I wanted the viewer to wonder what the woman might be carrying that cannot be seen.

Ainsley Dircks

Ghillie Dhu
Watercolor, Colored Pencil, Marker, Paint Marker, 9" x 12"
Cold Spring Harbor High School

Artist Statement

In her statement, Gina Lenopoli mentioned the myths and folklore of her native Filipino culture. This inspired my to recreate a creature from the stories of my Scottish roots: the Ghillie Dhu. In Scottish mythology, the Ghillie Dhu was said to have resided in the wild forests of the Highlands. He always wore a cloak of leaves, moss, and dirt. While he was known for watching out for lost children, rumor has it he wasn't as nice to adults In my piece, I wanted to reflect the more eerie and creepy aspect of the Ghillie Dhu story. I used a lot of shadows in the trees and gave him no face features to represent his mysterious air. I used a mix of watercolor, colored pencils, markers, and paint markers to create the texture of his cloak. I hope this piece evokes the uneasy feeling that is typically produced upon hearing of the Ghillie Dhu lurking in the trees when hearing Scottish folklore.

Olivia Eng



Wish
Darkroom Photo, 8" x 10"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

"Wish" was to demonstrate the meaning of being careful for what you wish for, expressed by the movie Obsession. The photo teaches not every wish is going to have a positive outcome and may come with consequences. Nikki is a character who was wished by her best friend Bear to love him forever although it didn't go as expected as Bear thought it would. Foreshadowing, individuals should be careful of their wishes as it can come with a negative side. It inspired me to create a photo where it would express the importance of the theme.

Gabriella Farber



Glistening Revenge
Charcoal, White Charcoal, 13" x 20"
North Babylon High School

Artist Statement

My work involves the Japanese folklore of the kitsune. The kitsune preys upon greedy people, drunkards, and young men. In my piece, I represented balance using black and white because the kitsune embodies good and punishes bad people. The king I drew in the right panel represents greed and sin, while the kitsune represents order and change. I chose to create this piece of artwork because the kitsune is an inspiration to many people to make a change in their lives and embody balance. I find interest in how the juror talks about storytelling to connect with others during a late night, because it gives off nostalgic vibes and sets the mood of childhood sleepovers which I like. I find that story telling through myths and legends is a very interesting way to bond and entertain.

Sanaa Fleming

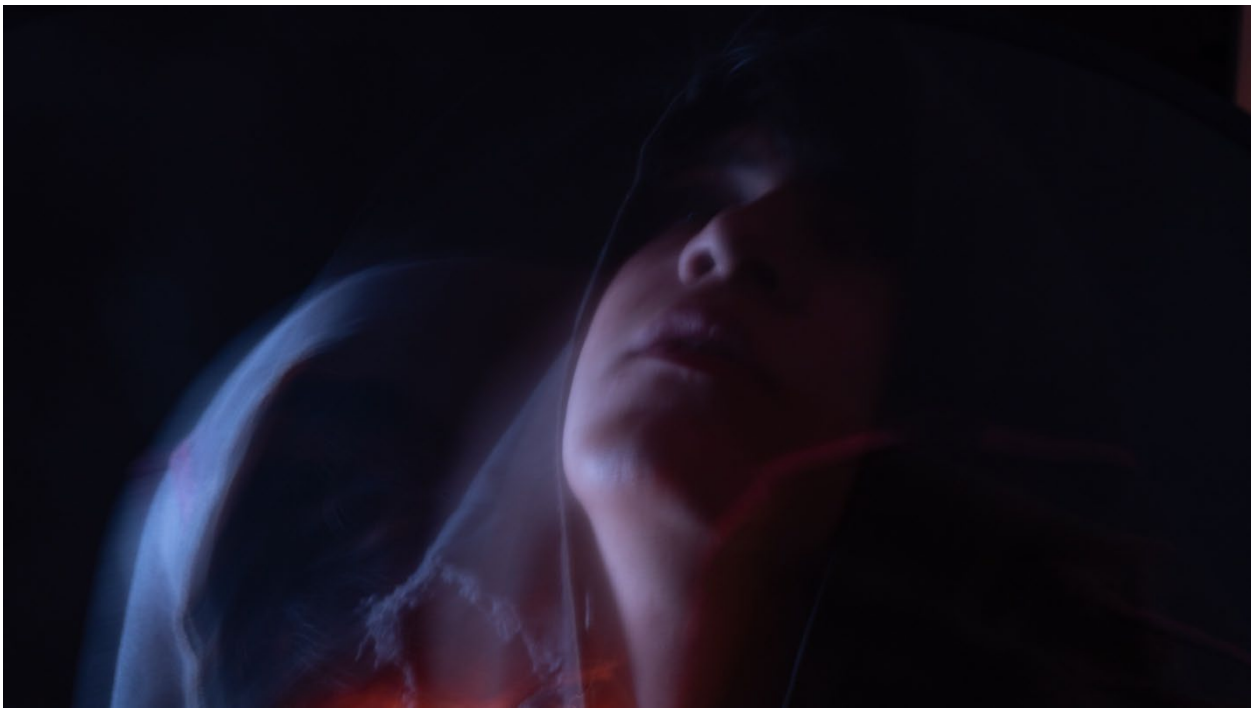


It's Alive!
Mixed Media on Canvas, 12" x 12"
Half Hollow Hills West High School

Artist Statement

I use my art to process my emotions and convey my feelings and interpretations of the world around me. In this work, I was inspired by the back story of Frankestein's Monster. It communicated that that if you are different you could be sometimes be considered scary. Humans always perceive differences as threats. Frankenstein was put together from many parts, so I created my work by combining four canvases into one image. I named my new creature "Frankenstine."

David Glorioso



Possession
Digital Photography, 11" x 14"
Half Hollow Hills West High School

Artist Statement

Possession:

The feeling of oneself being taken over. An emotion, a task, a passion, If it consumes you, it possesses you. It is your spirit, your spark for what you love; take it too far and it takes over your life. "Spirits of forests who can either bless or curse someone." You may love what you do but don't let it take control.

*In my photography, I love to experiment with color and light- I was inspired by the idea of what a creature could be and how you can represent passions and fears through human subjects.

Naomi Goldfarb



Ice
Digital, 6" x 4"
Plainview Old - Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

The underlying message is how global warming is affecting planet, especially how the increase in temperature of our planet is melting the icebergs, causing many animals in colder regions (polar bears) to lose their habitat. I chose digital because I wanted to show more explicit details of the creature and how it is a symbol of what global warming is doing to the polar bear region. Lastly, I took inspiration from the Diwata stories and how it is crucial to respect Earth and its environment. If we keep manufacturing in excess, the result becomes more of what the Tikyanak stories emphasize, which warn about the dangers of the unknown.

Abby Grant



Feeding the Fear
Prisma Colored Pencil and White Gel Pen, 9" x 12"
Plainview Old - Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

My piece is inspired by the Shedim, creatures from Jewish mythology that I imagined growing from people's fears. The underlying message is that fear can become more powerful when we allow it to take over our thoughts. I chose colored pencil and mixed media because I wanted to use dark colors and strong contrast to create a haunting atmosphere. The juror's idea that "fear is like a shapeshifter" inspired me to turn fear into the Shedim itself. I also used the idea that monsters can "echo the shadows that dwell within us" by showing the creature growing above the person, representing how their fears have become larger than themselves.

Zoey Grochow



Static
Digital Photography, 16" x 20"
Half Hollow Hills East High School

Artist Statement

My image depicts three children trapped inside of a television being captured by one of them with red eyes. The cracks in the television represent there attempt to escape. As I was creating this image I wanted it to feel like the viewer is in a vintage horrible film. As a photographer I love exploring different emotions and themes in my artwork.

Angel Guevara



In the room
Charcoal, 12" x 8"
Harborfields High School

Artist Statement

This piece explores the unsettling boundary between physical space and psychological dread within a desolate, eerie room. The atmosphere is dominated by a shadow entity breaking through the wall—a manifestation of pure, invasive darkness. Originating from "the void," a black hole of absolute nothingness, this entity is not bound by physical laws. It travels by slicing directly through the fabric of space and time, tearing open portals to manifest wherever its victims are. Unpredictable and omnipresent, the monster represents an unavoidable intrusion into safe spaces, transforming a familiar environment into a site of inescapable tension and unseen fear.

Diya Gupta



The Spirit of the Mist
Digital Photography, 20" x 16" x 1"
The Wheatley School

Artist Statement

My three photographs explore the creepy and mysterious side of nature through ice, forests, and foggy mountains. I imagined that each environment is home to a different creature: The Keeper of the Blue, The Watcher in the Woods, and The Spirit of the Mist. These creatures are not meant to be seen clearly, but their presence can be felt through the emptiness, darkness, and strange atmosphere in each photo. I wanted the pictures to feel like something is watching you even when you cannot see it, making the viewer question what could be hiding just outside the frame. Together, the photos tell a story about places in nature that seem beautiful during the day but may hold something much more frightening underneath

Brandon Gutierrez



Rise of Tsuchigumo
All Media, 18" x 24"
Valley Stream North High School

Artist Statement

The artwork tells a narrative inspired by the Japanese folklore creature Tsuchigumo, meaning "dirt spider." The monstrous spider represents the transformation of an innocent person into something dangerous after a destructive fight spread throughout the city. Before this moment, the person may have been ordinary and even protective of others, but the conflict changes him, causing his anger and darkness to take control. The earthy, shadowy appearance of the Tsuchigumo emphasizes fear, destruction, and the loss of humanity. The spider symbol in Spider-Man's eyes connects the creature to the hero who protects the city, suggesting that the monster is not only attacking the city but also challenging its protector. The narrative can be interpreted as a battle between protection and destruction, innocence and corruption. Ultimately, the artwork suggests that even someone who once had good intentions can become monstrous when consumed by conflict, anger, and the consequences of their actions.

Drew Hall



Umibozu's Curiosity
Graphite Drawing, 12" x 15"
Northport High School

Artist Statement

I decided to follow the folklore inspiration that Gina Lenopoli uses in her pieces. I turned to Japanese culture and folklore. I immediately turned to the Japanese legends of Yokai and those such creatures. One that seemed to catch my attention is the Umibozu or the "Sea Priest" or "Sea Monk." The Umibozu is described as a giant aquatic creature that has many variations but the most popular resembling a completely shaved and bald monk thus the name. Another part of its description that you should know is that it is only ever seen shoulders up out of the water and darker than a shadow meaning that people who have said to have seen it don't have an exact estimate of how tall and big the figure of the Umibozu truly is under the waves. The Umibozu appears on calm nights when nothing seems out of the ordinary and then all of a sudden, furious waves whip around the ship and a creature of titanic size rises out of the depths. Most of the time the Umibozu would smash the ship to pieces either in one go or piece by piece. But on a rare occasion the Umibozu would ask the crew of the ship for a barrel or ladle which the Umibozu would use to scoop huge amounts of water into the ship and quickly sink the boat and drown the sailors. The only way the sailors could counter this is by giving the Umibozu a barrel and/or ladle without the bottom of it, leading to the Umibozu unable to scoop water and giving the sailors time for a lucky escape. Some say that the Umibozu are the spirits of drowned monks, sent out to sea by angry villagers. I personally thought that this giant creature appearing in the water in the middle of the ocean to drown you is exactly what I could capture with this scary drawing but instead of the ship being huge, it would just be a small fishing Shimaihagi or small Japanese row boat to capture the true size in my eyes of this creature compared to that of a person. I have slight megalophobia and Thalassophobia so this truly connected to my fears on a personal level.

Gabe Harel

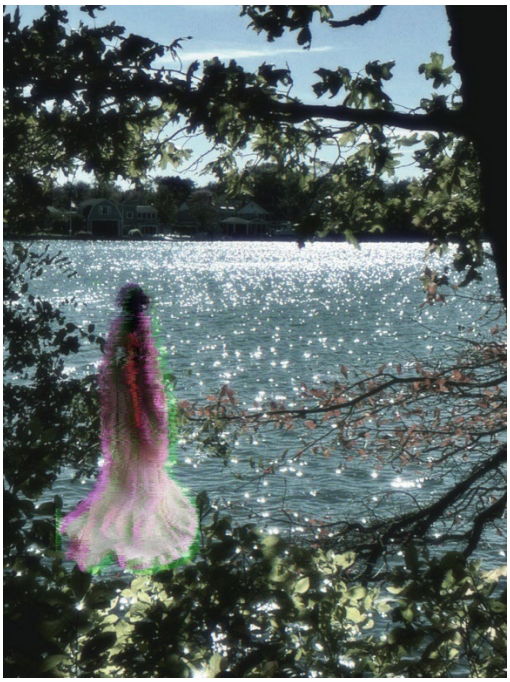


Guardian of the Four Dimensions
Digital Photography, 16" x 20"
Half Hollow Hills West High School

Artist Statement

My work stems from the documentation of my early memories. This piece depicts the figure of an Angel watching over Central Park- She represents the four dimensions. The first dimension is the sky, which the first cherub at the base points towards. The angel protects New York City's heavens from strays. The second dimension is Manhattan's green, or Central Park's Land. The angel guards its wildlife and protects the nature. The third dimension is the water. The angel physically guards the Croton Aqueduct, which brings clean drinking water into the city. The fourth dimension is the city around Central Park. The Angel protects its residents and beauty.

WenXi He

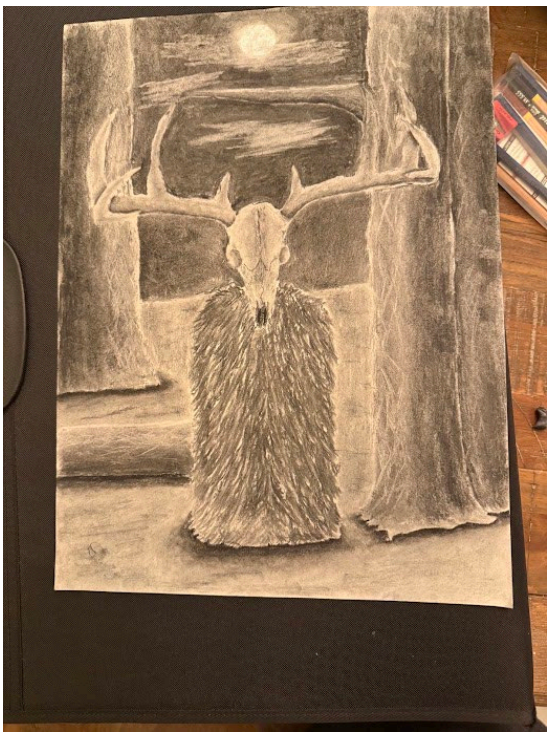


Veil Nymph
Digital Photography, 20" x 24"
Plainview Old - Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

For this photography project, I was inspired by Philippine Diwata folklore and Greek myths about lake spirits like Limnades and Naiads. I created my own mythical creature called the Veil Nymph. It's a protective spirit that only lives in quiet freshwater lakes. Through this creature, I wanted to share a simple message: people have a responsibility to keep lakes clean and peaceful. For the photos, I used misty lake landscapes to show the nymph's mysterious and isolated home. This project is meaningful to me because I think old folk stories can still teach us something today, especially about respecting nature and protecting fragile freshwater environments.

Aleksandr Higbee



Танцующий череп оленя
Paper, Charcoal, 16" x 12" x 1.5"
Harborfields High School

Artist Statement

The dancing deer skull is an entity found in the dark forests of Russia. It can appear anywhere within the forest to any person. If the deer skull appears in front of you, it will challenge you to a dance battle. Now, the entity is extremely good at dancing, however if it determines that you have out-danced it or at least matched up to its skill, you will be let go. But, should you fail in your attempt, you will be forever cursed to stay in the forest. The message of my story is to always be prepared for any situation, because some situations won't give you a second opportunity to prepare for them. This entity was inspired from the Russian folklore and fairytales my mom used to read to me. i was also inspired by the part of the juror's quote that emphasized the messages behind the 2 Filipino folklore monsters. (also, if you're curious on how to pronounce the Russian words, it's: Tanstooyosheche cherep olenya)

Hunter Hogan



Untitled
Digital Drawing, 9" x 13"
Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School

Artist Statement

I played with the idea of darkness and how light plays into this. The twinkle and the shimmer of the eye contrasts to the shadows of the dark, creating an earie feeling in the piece. A Prosperous Home by Gina Lenopoli inspired this piece by playing with the contrast of light and dark. What figure lies in the darkness is it friend or foe?

Anna Hu



Smashing Pumpkins
Colored Pencil, Alcohol Marker, White Gen Pen, 8" x 12"
Half Hollow Hills East High School

Artist Statement

My piece reimagines the Halloween tradition of pumpkin carving. However, instead of carving, I raise my fist to smash an oversized pumpkin, treating it like a monster I have to face/conquer. The bright colors and exaggerated scale create a playful first impression, while my defiant expression, raised fist, and the complementary background colors introduce tension, turning an ordinary Halloween practice into something unexpected and confrontational. I used colored pencil over alcohol marker to emphasize the vivid, nostalgic colors I remember from childhood, along with layered textures. I was most inspired by Ienopoli's description of the Tiyanak, which mimics a crying baby to lure people into danger, transforming something familiar into something deceptive. I wanted to similarly shift a familiar tradition into something unfamiliar and threatening. The Tiyanak stories warn against rashness and the unknown; my raised fist echoes this idea, confronting something that initially appears playful and familiar.

Matthew Huskisson



Mind, Power, and Good Purpose
Pencil & Ink (Marker) on Construction Paper, 10" x 12" x 2 mil
Valley Stream North High School

Artist Statement

My work is inspired by the modern-day superhero Iron Man, an engineer that uses his mind to create technology to protect the world. The story in my artwork shows Iron Man using his mind to create technology to defeat Thanos, a villain who threatens all life while attempting to collect power stones spread across the universe. The moral I communicate is that those with the ability to act also have the responsibility to prevent evil and wrongdoing because one person is all it takes to make a positive difference in the world. The main symbol I use to convey this message is the blue and gold power streams connecting the stones and the glove to everything in the story which represents the "good power" inside of us all that can overcome anything when put into action. The other symbols I use are the asteroids and planets which represent all of us and how that "good power" can bring us together to do great things, the power stones which represent our emotions to help create a positive reality, and the glove which represents the things we can do when we focus our mind.

Gavin Imhof



Vampire's Rattle
Digital Photography, 20" x 24"
Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

Tiyanak (pronounced tianak) is a folkloric vampire, dwarf-like creature. "The Tiyanak is typically described as resembling a human infant, often appearing weak, helpless, or abandoned. When its deception is successful, the creature is said to transform, revealing sharp features, claws, and a more aggressive appearance." I am very interested in the Philippines because my dear friend is from the Philippines. To me, the Tiyanak means appearances can be deceiving, like the stories of sailors hearing the sirens' voices; but instead of mind control, the Tiyanak uses your will to help a "baby in distress."

Laila Jabir



The Chase
Digital Photography, 8" x 10"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

For my photos, I was inspired by the classic folktale of Little Red Riding Hood, which was told to warn girls and women about the dangers of the world, where the wolf deceives a little girl by pretending to be her grandmother. For my photos, my dog was dressed up like a grandmother to portray the disguised wolf in the stories to bring to life the different parts of the class story.

Lillian Katz



A Spooky Night at the Pumpkin Patch
Acrylic on Canvas, 10" x 8"
Cold Spring Harbor High School

Artist Statement

My muses were the famous works Starry Night and The Scream. I chose acrylic paint because I thought that would be the best way to create the swirling effect for the sky and mix the many vibrant colors. My family has always gone to the pumpkin patch in early October and carved the pumpkins we found. I wanted to create a piece that reminded me of Halloween when I was younger which is why I included the pumpkins and the ghosts.

Khushpreet Kaur



Fire Snake
Watercolors and Ink, 18" x 12"
Walt Whitman High School

Artist Statement

The creature I created is called the Fire Snake. This creature is a cross between a snake and a peacock living in a volcanic environment. The colors I chose for the snake are colors of peacock feathers mixed together to create a mix of blue and green. The colors I chose for the peacock feathers are red, orange, and yellow which are colors of a red-bellied snake and drew them as a shape of fire. The environment the Fire Snake lives in is a volcanic cave with lava surrounding it.

Renuka Kayastha



The Static
Prismacolor Colored Pencils, 11" x 14"
Harborfields High School

Artist Statement

My artwork depicts a creature that represents the dangers of false rumors and online gossip within the technology world. I was inspired by my observation of how information can spread through technology and how something said online can have consequences, even when you think no one is listening or watching. My creature, The Static, lives between screens and feeds off lies and gossip that may be spread. Eventually, it can grow bigger and desire to feed off of the rumor-spreader. I want to contrast an ordinary desk and phone with an unsettling creature to show how something familiar can become threatening. Finally, my artwork communicates the importance of telling the truth and being careful about what we say online.

Julia Kilgus



The Injecting Fear Behind Type 1 Diabetes
Charcoal, 20" x 16" x 0"
East Rockaway High School

Artist Statement

Type 1 diabetes entered my life at age two, forcing me to grow up faster than most kids–learning discipline, awareness, and resilience long before I even understood what those words meant. As a child, instead of worrying about how much time was left till recess, I was worrying about how much more time I had before my next injection. Always wondering if my blood sugars would spike or drop, always fearing if my next move could lead to another nurse's visit, and most of all fearing the unknown. In the Juror's quote, she emphasizes "...the dangers of the unknown...". This part of the Juror's quote inspired me because Type 1 Diabetes is a disease of unknowing-ness. Not knowing whether or not your blood sugars will stay at level, or the next time you'll have to inject. My work encapsulates the fear that type one diabetes injects into diabetics. The dullness of my piece represents the shadows that type 1 diabetics live in daily, while still having to live a "normal" life. I create pieces surrounding my disease to raise awareness. Type 1 diabetes is not something that defines me, it is something that has shaped me into the young artist I am today.

Emma Klein

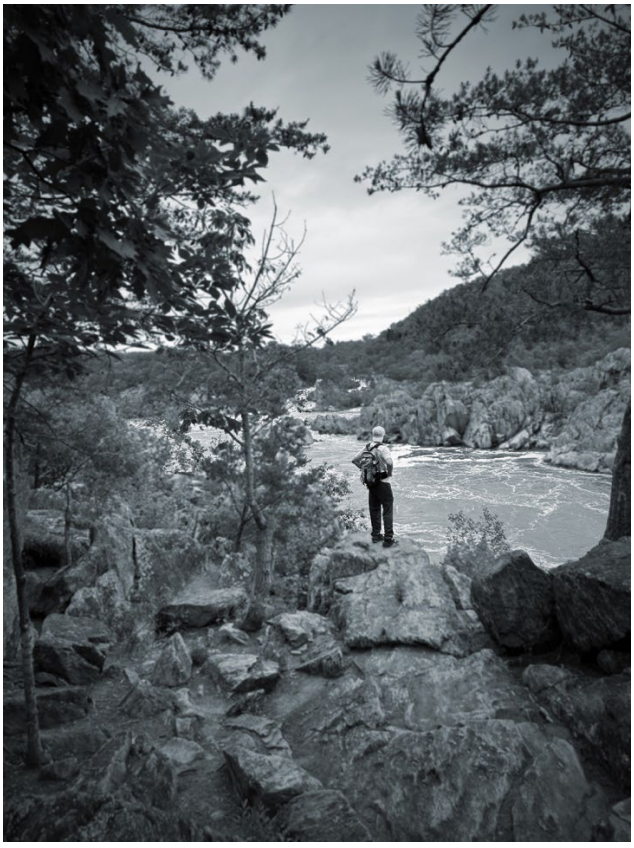


The Raven
Micron Pen, 10" x 11"
Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

This drawing is inspired by ink illustrations you'd find in old fairytales. I wanted to give the drawing a darker tone by incorporating the raven on her shoulder. The prompt's focus on folklore registered with me, because like art, folklore often personifies animals and objects in an irresistible way. In folklore ravens are often a bad omen, but can also represent wisdom and rebirth. The drawing reminds me of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" which I first read during English class. The way the poem repeats itself, with each line ending in "nevermore" and "nothing more" adds a layer of despair and madness. I wanted to capture that feeling in this drawing with the black ink, melancholic eyes, looming figure of the raven, and the almost sickening repetitiveness of the stippling. I also want it to represent our enduring fascination with magic, which makes Halloween so special.

Zackery Lau



By Fast Moving Waters
Photoshop, 12" x 9"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

When I think of meanings in fables, I think of danger. Almost all fables are told to scare children into avoiding certain places or situations. Such as, don't go into the forest alone at night or, most famously, don't follow the man in the white van who has candy. This photo represents the fables warning against going to rushing rivers alone, for there are monsters who can gobble up careless children. I now understand that the so called monster is the water itself, but I fear the water nevertheless.

Jayden Lee



Dissection
Acrylic Paint, Fabric, 14" x 11" x ¾"
Harborfields High School

Artist Statement

The key point I focused on while creating this piece was contrast, which can be seen in two main ways. One being the art mediums, acrylic paints and fabric, the second being color choice. I utilized acrylics for most of the bordering elements, while the fabric emits from the center. The differing patterns of fabric stitched together conveys struggle with identity, and being unsure of what really fits. In addition, a large portion of the piece is in cool tones, while the heart bursts with a bold red. The phrase "bleeding heart" was one of my main inspirations. In the context of my piece, it refers to bursting at the seams emotionally. Although it strays further away from the more popular understanding of the phrase, it still aided my process to put my emotions down onto a canvas.

Riana Lee



That's Not Mom
Colored Pencils, 8" x 10"
Half Hollow Hills East High School

Artist Statement

In Korean folklore, there's a story about a tiger who ate a woman and went to her house to try to eat her children. When the tiger knocks on the door, there goes a sequence not unlike when Red-Riding Hood finds the disguised wolf in her grandmother's bed. This was the main idea for my work, a child's nightmare when they're alone. The first sentence of the Juror's quote had inspired me, as I wanted to create something with the stories I was told when I was younger. I used colored pencils because the imperfect strokes made it feel like a fragment of a scared child's imagination. I made the three-headed creature—a tiger, fox, and magpie— look as if it's searching for the hiding children, while the magpie head stares right at you like you've been caught.

Chloe Leung

Night before Nian
Digital Photography, 56 x 42
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

My artwork takes the theme name "Nightmare on Main Street" literally and combines it with the Chinese holiday, Lunar New Year. The folktale for Lunar New Year is based on the dragon Nian who the people of the village are terrified of that appears every New Year. The people later find out that NIan is scared of the color red, loud noises, and bright light. The photo depicts an empty street with one street light shining in the middle. This to mimic the emptiness of the streets of the village the night before the New Year. The red colors shining out of the houses show the preparations being made in order to scare off the monster Nian.

Noémie Lhusissier



Le fantôme de Fore la Latte
Fabric on Paper, 33" x 40"
Northport High School

Artist Statement

The dress is inspired by the French folklore of the five bloody monks also know as the ghost of Fore la Latte (le fantôme de Fore la Latte). My goal was it to turn this legend of five bandit monks who were hung for their crimes and buried their treasures under the castle, into a dress. The jurors work inspired me to chose a rather less know story from my home town instead of a well known fairy tale. The overall dress symbolics the robe of a monk, changed from its simple linen into opulent fabrics, which build a contrast between the down to earth nature of a monk and the greed of the ones from the story. The rope on the waist is mixed with gemstones to symbolic their stolen wealth and their treasure. The shroud over the head is embroidered, which was only typical for royalty and wealthy people during the Middle Ages. The rope around the neck symbolises their tragic ending, where they got hung in front of the castle for their crimes.

Stephanie Lindemann



The Beast's Den
Mixed Media, 12" x 16"
Harborfields High School

Artist Statement

My work explores themes surrounding the embodiment of greed, but that even with selfishness and greed, you can still have the growth of nature around you. The creature in this piece is a Lindwyrm, a type of dragon-like creature that is popular in central/eastern European cultures. The Lindwyrm is typically attributed to being the birth of the myth that dragons hoard treasure, as it was said that anything that laid beneath a Lindwyrm would multiply. I wanted to demonstrate this in both the large gold pile, showing a recognizable trait associated with dragon-like beings, but also with vines and moss growing on the walls to indicate the growth of what the Lindwyrm covers. I also use a perspective that implies that the viewer is looking at the Lindwyrm's hoard, so the beast is baring it's teeth at us, showing that greed and wanting to protect what is their treasure.

Borui Lu



Echoes of the White Snake
Graphite, Ink, Colored Pencil, 12" x 9"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

My concept for this artwork was a mask that twists a person's perception. It changes their mindset about the things that are happening to them. In my story, I thought of a boy who was bullied. He found this mask that twisted his mind - Now, he found happiness in the negative things that were happening to him... but he also found joy in causing pain to others who harmed him. The lesson is that you shouldn't bully others, because the actions you commit can come back to harm you. When making this artwork, I used graphite, ink, and colored pencils to emphasize the contrast between the darkness of the mask and the lightness of the emotions.

Carolyn Luna Martinez



Opictukule
Watercolor and Markers, 12" x 18"
Walt Whitman High School

Artist Statement

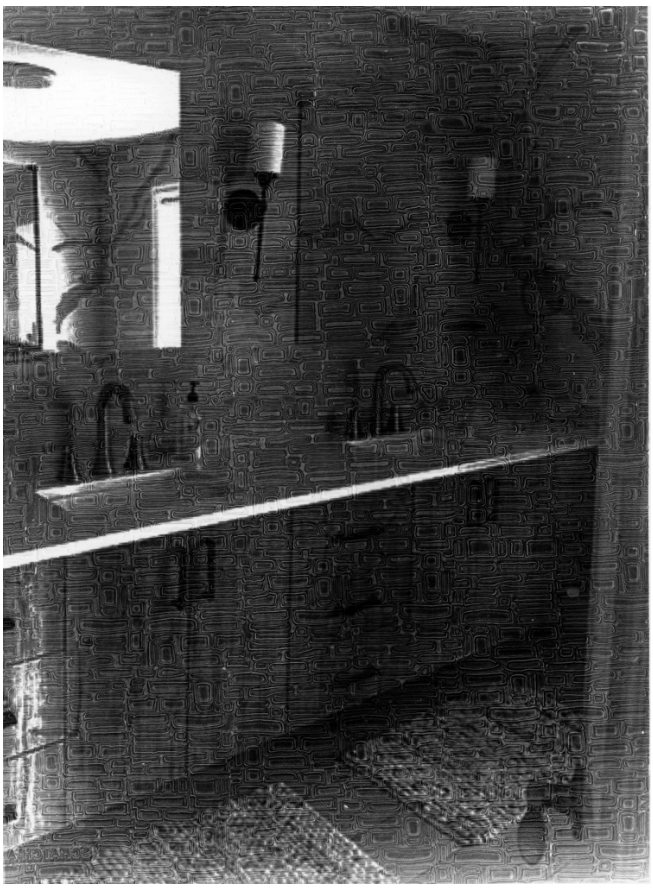
I created a mythical creature named **Opictukule**, based on Japanese art. Japanese samurai are warriors. This mythical creature hides something beautiful. Opictukule is something that looks hard but is also beautiful, like the waves in the picture. This picture explains the unfolding of something dangerous into something optimistic. I was inspired by octopuses because they are interesting and optimistic creatures. The materials I used to make my painting are watercolor, white marker, and black marker. My favorite part is the sketch of the boat. This painting took me three days to make, and it is one of my proudest artworks. Opictukule is a mix of a squid, a cheetah, and a human eye. I used techniques such as dotting and cross-hatching to create texture on my creature. I also used numerous colors and variations. This year, I'm taking my art to another level and coming out of my comfort zone. :) From the heart

Lucas Martinez



Untitled
Graphite on Paper, 12" x 9"
North Babylon High School

Zaynab Mashriqi



Bloody Mary
Darkroom Photogrpahy, 8" x 10"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

"Bloody Mary" is a short story almost every child knows about growing up. Maybe your friends told you that story or a family member to try and scare you as a child. This story took place in a dark bathroom and a child would look in the mirror repeatedly saying "bloody mary." Soon later a scary woman, Bloody Mary, would appear out of the mirror to "haunt" the children. This piece relates to my childhood as growing up I was told this story by my older cousins trying to constantly scare me.

Lailah Masihuddin

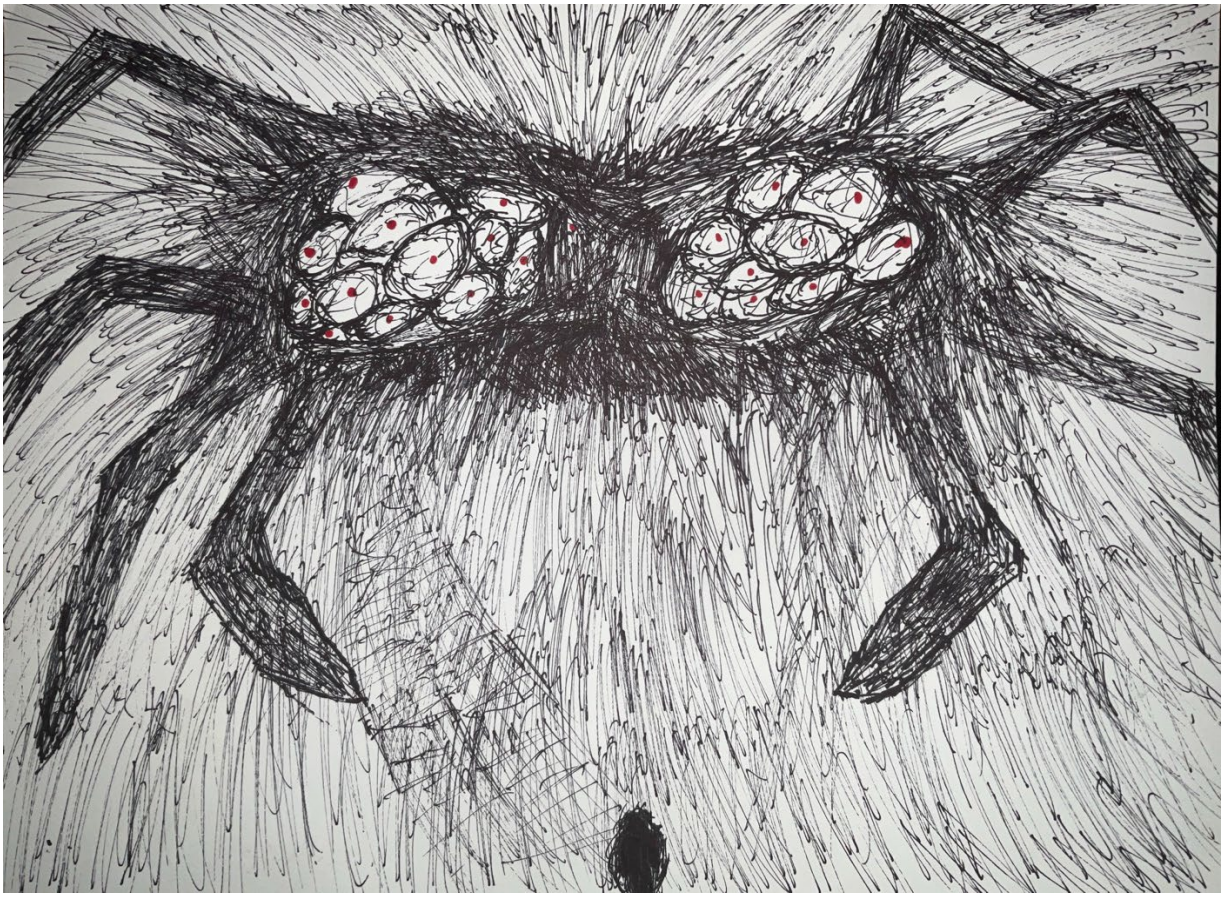


The Misleading Dragon
Pencil, 18" x 12"
Valley Stream North High School

Artist Statement

My story is about a pregnant dragon flying over villages to find a safe place to lay her eggs. She couldn't find a piece of land without civilization, So, she just landed in a small village that had a large field. She had her eggs and laid them into a nest made of sticks. However, the villagers assumed that she was there to attack them and destroy their home. So, they gathered their weapons and prepared to attack the dragon. The dragon was caught off guard but was determined to protect her babies from harm. The villagers never thought she was there to cause no harm and they assumed the worst. The dragon was weak so untimely lost the battle. At her last moments she prayed her babies would be okay without her. Skeptical minds can create massive impacts in someone's life even if you think it's the right thing.

Ani McBreaty



The Spider
Fine Point Sharpies, 9" x 12"
Stimson Middle School

Artist Statement

In my art, I like to make whatever pops into my mind at the moment. Sometimes I draw inspiration from nature or figures. I prefer doing realistic art over abstract, so I include real life objects/people/animals or places.

Chistina McNally



Death of Humanity
Charcoal, 12" x 9"
North Babylon High School

Artist Statement

Baba Yaga is a witch from Slavic folklore. She lives in a house that rests on chicken legs as she confronts travelers who encounter her, especially if they are disrespectful. Ienopoli's quote made me think of nature and how some people are not respectful of it, but it often can't fight back. In my artwork Baba Yaga has trapped people in her house and is walking them into a forest fire caused by humans who have already killed the land by littering (tires on the ground), killing wildlife (deer laying shot dead), and cutting down trees (tree stumps). Humans have destroyed her forest so she will destroy them and their loved ones. Environmental destruction hurts everyone, so Baba Yaga also traps pets, children, and families, shown in the windows. The artwork is meant to show that humanity is walking into their downfall through environmental degradation.

Chelsea Michel

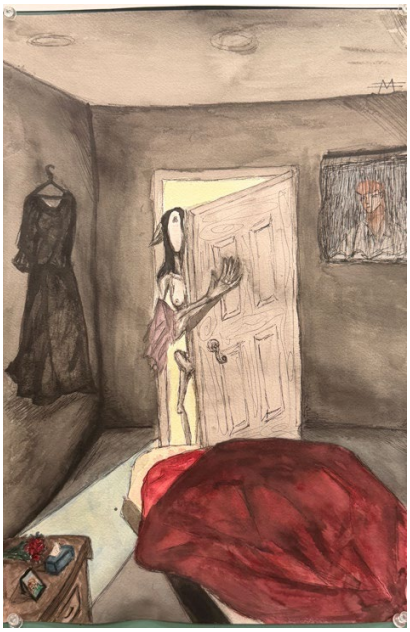


A Regretful Decision
Colored Pencils and Pencil, 18" x 12"
Valley Stream North High School

Artist Statement

A famous scuba diver has heard rumors about treasure deep in the sea. Many scuba divers have disappeared because of this rumor, but he decides to take the risk and travel deep into the ocean. He keeps searching and searching, going deeper into the sea, until he sees something glimmering in the distance. It is a treasure chest filled with valuable treasure. The sea creatures try to warn the scuba diver not to steal the treasure, but he ignores them and lets greed get the best of him. Before he can reach the treasure, a mysterious sea creature with a tail, horns, and a trident appears behind him. The sea creature stands between the diver and the treasure, ready to protect it from anyone who tries to take it. The diver suddenly realizes that the treasure may come with consequences, but it may already be too late.

Fiona Mockler



Mourning-bird
Watercolour and Ink, 12" x 18"
Walt Whitman High School

Artist Statement

I was inspired by the richness of traditional Irish folklore, sleep paralysis, and grief for this work. The creature combines features of night-hags, brownies, faeries, and the banshee and is a sorrowful wanderer who visits the cold empty beds of the recently widowed. Though terrifying, she is a benevolent spirit and only wishes to comfort those she visits. When she enters someone's room, they are seized by a stiffening cold, and cannot move, and this only worsens as she approaches the bed. She symbolises grief and death, and so do many of the objects in the room. Starting with the room itself, everything is distorted. This represents how disorienting loss can feel. There is a black mourning dress hung on the wall. There are flowers and tissues on the nightstand, which is just out of reach from the bed. These are comfort, but the widow cannot get to them without leaving the bed. Speaking of which, red sheets were often used to represent loyalty and childbirth. There used to be two sleeping here. Now there is one. Not all is lost, however. The symbol on the cailleach's head is the Gaelic triskele, which represents the cycles of life and death.

Leah Moran

Come Closer
Gouache, 16" x 12"
North Babylon High School

Artist Statement

My work took inspiration from Scottish folklore surrounding the kelpie, a mythical, shapeshifting swamp horse. Stories about the kelpie have historically been used to scare young children from wandering into Scotland's deep lakes. The idea for this work was derived from the Juror's statement about creating a work surrounding a lesson taught by a mythical creature from my own culture. I decided to paint this work with gouache in order to create a mystical and childlike atmosphere, as this myth was most frequently told to children.

Rosa Moshonas



The Light
Photo, 5 : 7
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

I took this photo when I was in Greece it was 2am and I couldn't sleep so I went out. this photo shows a small light surrounded by trees and the night sky leading the viewer to think the light is a guide

Noah Murphy



Arrival
Marker, Charcoal, Colored Pencil and Oil Pastels, 9" x 12"
Cold Spring Harbor High School

Artist Statement

I decided to use a more scratchy, kind of panicked style for this piece to represent the panic and fear that is felt during war. The monster depicted isn't a fictional creature or demon, but a soldier, emerging from a burning forest and village.

Miles Neri



Halloween at Sleepy Hollow
Bristle Paper, Marker, Graphite Pencil, 12" x 18"
Cold Spring Harbor High School

Artist Statement

Halloween is my favorite holiday and I love to draw its icons. The headless horseman is one of my personal favorites, because of its unique design, story, and film appearances. Juror's specific appeal to the Tiyanak and it's folk lore inspired me to focus on some monsters I find interesting. The headless horseman, being described by many different stories, is mainly thought to be a revolutionary soldier who was decapitated by a cannon, and now rides a horse with a pumpkin for a head. This raw and creepy tale seemed the perfect fit for the complex monster I was looking to draw.

Molly Oak



The Face of Desire
Colored Pencil, 9" x 12"
North Babylon High School

Artist Statement

I was inspired by themes of self discovery and lack of self identity, specifically with clowns who are constantly looking to put on a face for others. I chose to use colored pencils because I believe I would be able to capture enough detail to fully capture the differences between the monster and his reflection. The juror ´ s quote inspired me because clowns are a common figure in American society, entertaining, and even haunting circus tents. While the actor you see performing his show on stage may seem happy and joyful, the audience may never know his dark secrets. The quote influenced my approach to creating my artwork because I wanted to encapsulate the true meaning of a false reality, and how what you see in the mirror may not be what is truly there.

Guiliana Oliveri



Leer-Lime Deer
Watercolor, 12" x 18"
Walt Whitman High School

Artist Statement

This creature is a lime deer named Leer. She got washed up in the ocean after a sour storm. She now lives in the tropical coast of limeland. It was a very harsh journey; Leer was abandoned by her parents at a very young age so she had to make her own way around. When she got trapped in the sour storm she fought very hard to make it through. Eventually she became so immune to the lime that she grew to be a part of it. Leer made many new friends on the coast and started a life there. This myth demonstrates the lesson of never giving up. Leer fought all by herself to get through the sour storm and in the end she turned out to be just fine. There are clues of this that can be shown through the spots leer has in the painting and the lime-like sunset in the background with the hues of blue and green in the sky.

Adrian Oriol



Chickmummie
Artist Pencils, 11" x 8"
Half Hollow Hills East High School

Artist Statement

The artwork is designed of a three headed mummified chicken but two of them are going to hell dragging the angel with them. I chose this media to add value and to illustrate the darkness and fire of hell. The Juror quote inspired me because it gave me the idea of creating a folklore on different creatures which brought me to a mummified chicken.

Aeryn O'Rourke



Static Mind
Pen, 12" x 18"
Cold Spring Harbor High School

Artist Statement

During my piece I knew I wanted to only incorporate one medium with only a few strokes of it to show how something so simple can create a bigger picture. My piece was inspired by my passion to draw things with deeper pictures inside. The piece is meant to represent confusion and frustration and the scares behind it, showing feelings that everyone experiences.

Abbi Ortega

The Deep Forest
Watercolor, 9" x 12"
Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

My artwork shows a creepy forest and far in the background is a campfire and a tent with a siren like creature hiding in the tent trying to lure you in. I was inspired by the Native Filipinos who 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. My artwork tells a similar story to this, it shows a magical force pulling you deeper in the forest but you don't know what the creature looks like, or what's going to happen when you follow the magical path which adds a sense of curiosity and fear to the artwork.

Shelby Ortiz



El Chupacabras
Graphite, Ink, Marker, 9" x 12"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School

Artist Statement

The chupacabra connects to me because it Is a Puerto Rican mythical creature, and my ethnicity is Puerto Rican. so, I looked up Puerto Rican scary mythical creature, and the el chupacabra came up which chupacabra means the "goat sucker". When I started drawing I pictured like a midnight water forest type of art piece because Puerto Rico is a Caribbean island that's where I got water from and for midnight it says that it comes out at night and for the forest it said it's near the grassy farm area. When I was drawing it just freestyled it in my head and added details that would fit the image.

Ian Oster



The Consequences for a Toxic Fandom
Digital, 11" x 8.5" x 0"
Plainview Old-Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

The message of my work is that toxicity in fandoms is a horrible thing, and being a toxic member of a fandom shouldn't exist. I chose to use digital art as a media because I have been using it for the past 3 years, and have gotten very well at using it to create art. The Juror's quote mentioning a folklore creatures like the Tiyanak, and how the stories involve the creature teaching people a lesson, it inspired me to make a creature that is similar, but in a modern setting. My work involves a monster emerging from a computer in a dark basement, ready to punish toxic members of fandoms. The creature itself is essentially an amalgamation of different characters from some of the most toxic fandoms I could think of, put together into a Frankenstein's monster-like creature.

Kate Park

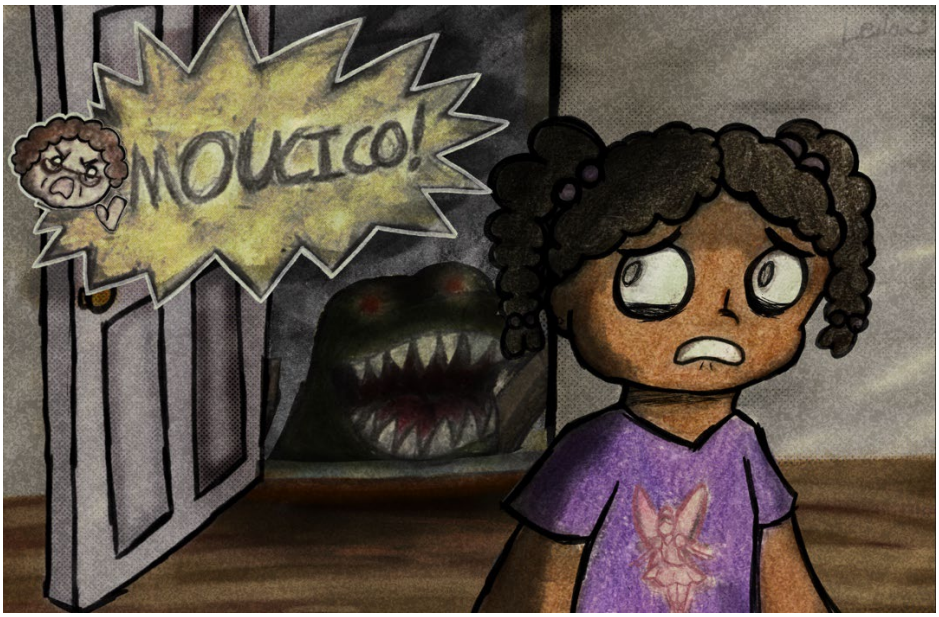


A Guardian In Plain Sight
Digital Photography, 20" x 16" x 1"
The Wheatley School

Artist Statement

My work explores how mythical creatures can exist within ordinary places and reveal things we often overlook. In The City Watcher, I transformed an everyday pigeon into a mysterious guardian of the urban environment, inspired by the Diwata and the idea of spirits that watch over nature. In The Stories That Lurk, I imagined a creature living within a book, bringing the captivating and sometimes frightening stories of folklore into the real world. Both pieces were inspired by the juror's discussion of folklore as a way to share stories and pass lessons from one generation to the next. I used photography and digital manipulation to make familiar environments feel supernatural and unsettling. Together, the works suggest that mythical creatures do not have to exist in distant worlds, they can be hidden in the places we see every day, waiting for us to notice them.

Leila Percy



Moucico!
Colored Pencils/Digital Illustration, 7" x 10 3/4"
Half Hollow Hills East High School

Artist Statement

This piece is inspired by my childhood basement monster named Moucico (pronounced moo-see-co). Whenever I misbehaved, my grandma would threaten to call him to come out of her basement and eat me. I imagined him as a T-Rex, as he's depicted in the piece, but also sometimes as a middle aged white man for some reason. I believe my sibling imagined him as a shadow monster.

The ideas I took from the juror's statement were ones of using culture to create horror. I'm pretty sure Moucico isn't an actual cultural figure anywhere, including Haiti, but there's something to be said about the generational method of scaring your children into listening to you. It's not too uncommon for more intimidating methods of discipline to be used in Haitian households, so I went about creating the piece by depicting a form of intimidation that i went through through a more horror type lens, where the monster is actually real.

Lan Qiu

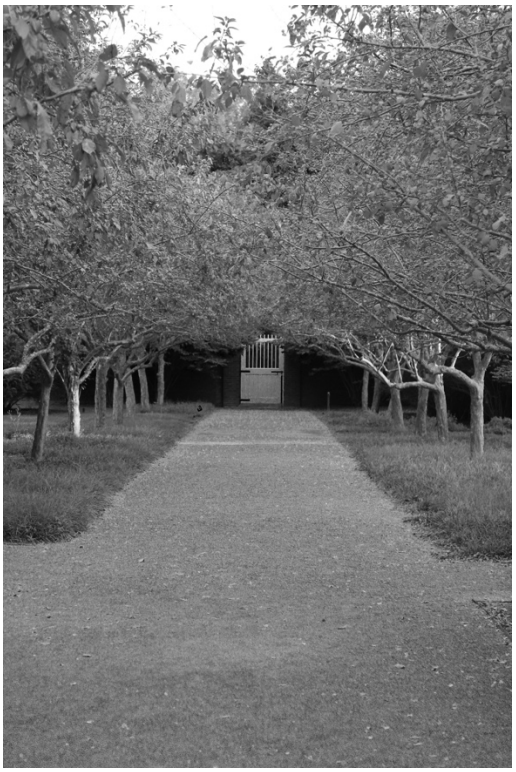


Untiled
Darkroom Photography, 5" x 7"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

Through dozens of centuries, the myth of Chang'e grew to have different tellings of her story. Ranging from Chang'e being a selfless savior, to betraying her loved one. From these different versions, the message and theme stays clear, with isolation and irreversible consequences. In order to capture the melancholic origin of folklore, I decided to choose a black and white medium to focus.

Brandon Ramirez



Garden of Eden
Digital, 8" x 10"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

Uncanny Manor and Garden of Eden were both created with the means of interpretation from the viewer. The sense of unknown that is conveyed through Garden of Eden's white door, surrounded by foliage, implicates the countless possibilities that are behind the door. The estate in Uncanny Manor combined with the transition from rough grass into a short, mowed lawn leads the viewer to contemplate the conditions of the manor, and its inhabitants.

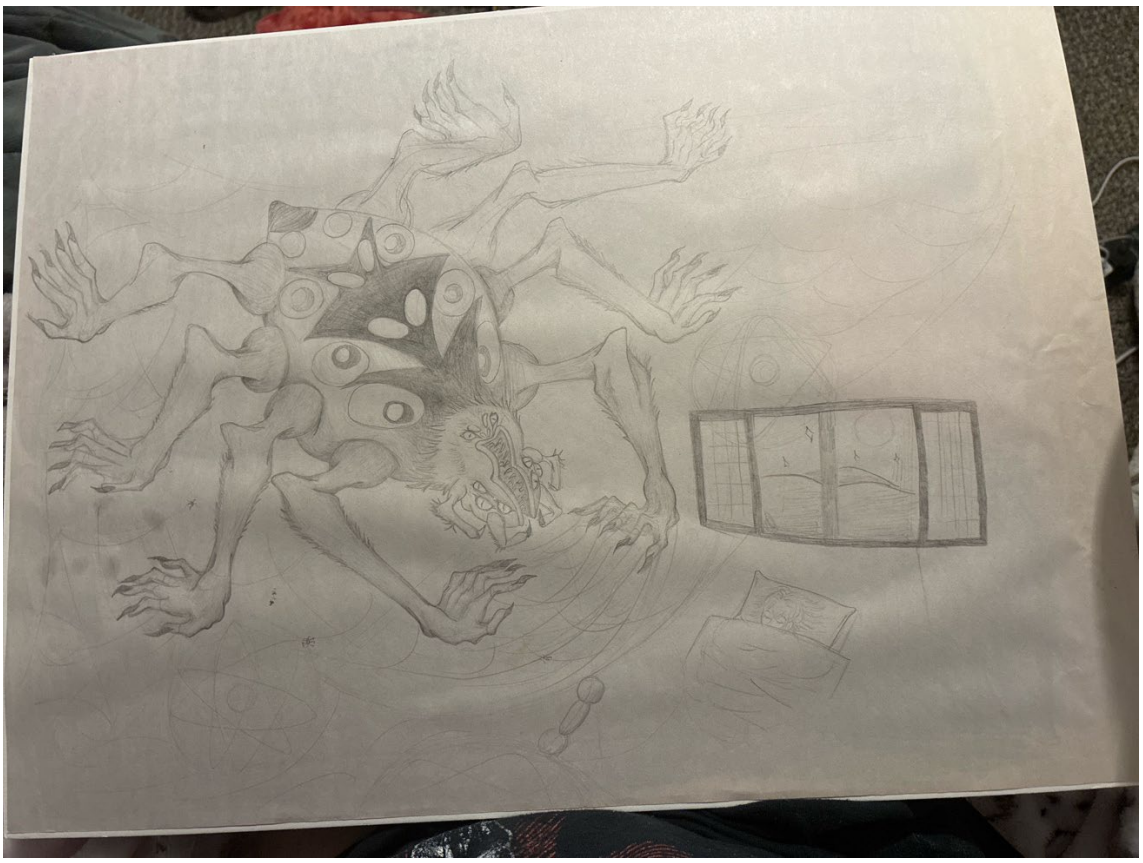
Kevin Ramirez Garcia

The Cobra man.
Water Color and Inking, 12" x 18"
Walt Whitman High School

Artist Statement

My creature is a mix of a human, a snake, and an octopus. He has a sort of human body with the head of a cobra and the tentacles of an octopus. He lives in the wild forest but mostly likes to spend time in the water. Surrounded by dark long trees, mountains, and a beautiful body of water. He used to be an ordinary man, but one day he was bit by a mystical creature and became this unbelievable and imaginable creature. He protects his home and those who live in the natural world from any outsider or intruders. He himself dislikes humans even though he was one himself. He may look harmful and scary but he is just trying to protect nature and preserve the wild from any danger. This story teaches us about perspective and about judgement based on looks. One should not judge someone based on their appearance or looks as they could turn out to be a whole different person. I made it look like he is this monstrous gigantic creature but also tried to make him look a bit protective and noble.

Ava Ramos



The Celestial Orb Weaver
Shading Pencils, 18" x 24"
William Floyd High School

Artist Statement

This creature is called The Celestial Orb weavers. Normally known for their webs looking like dream catchers celestial orb weavers choose a more sinister twist praying on those who sleep and harvesting their dreams leaving only their nightmares remaining. I chose this creature based off of the real life spider behind it, finding their weaving patterns. Very interesting.

Scartlett Rios



The Lady of the River
Pencil, 9" x 12"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School

Artist Statement

This drawing was inspired by the folklore of La Llorona, or the weeping woman. She's a spirit who haunts rivers and lakes looking for the children she drowned, the moral of the story is to stay away from lakes or rivers, though I think the moral is not to rash things in the mist of things.

Holly Rojas

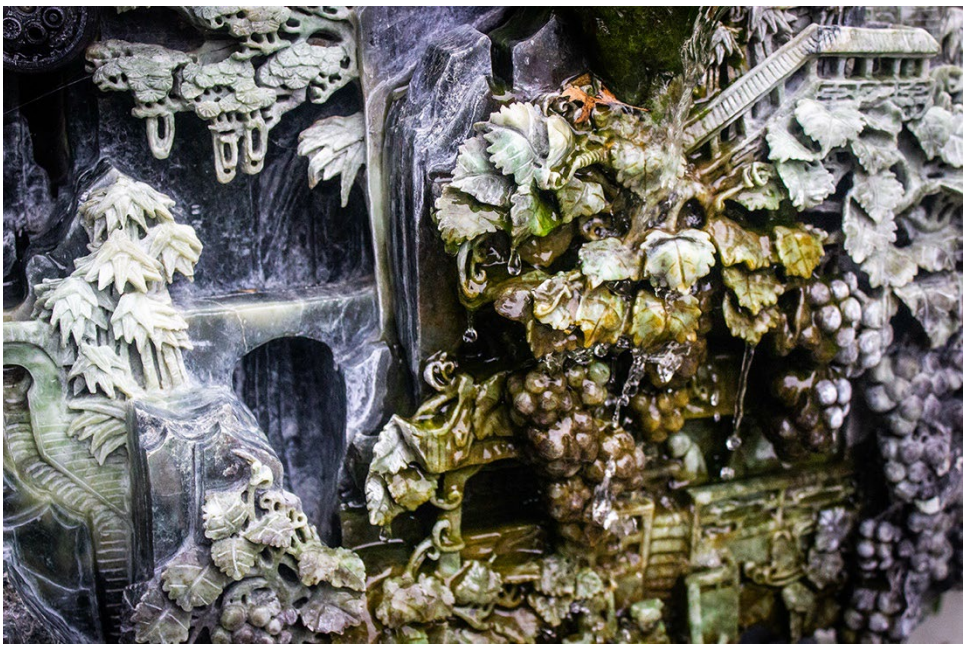


Justful Josefina
Colored Pencil and Sharpie, 15" x 21"
William Floyd High School

Artist Statement

The overall message for my artwork is to treat others how you want to be treated and that any actions do not go unnoticed. I decided to work with color pencils to emphasize the brightness of natural beauty as well as to highlight the differences in cultural aspects which involve pops of colors. The mention of "folklore from various cultures" lead me to the idea to blend all different aspects of who I am including my different cultures and put it in a physical form of art to represent not only a message but also what I believe in. I believe that your actions come back to you; in my artwork when someone is planning on attacking another, a beast is sent after them to cause chaos upon that person. The chosen colors are to represent my joy for brighter days and to be proud of my hispanic heritage.

Sofia Rosamilia

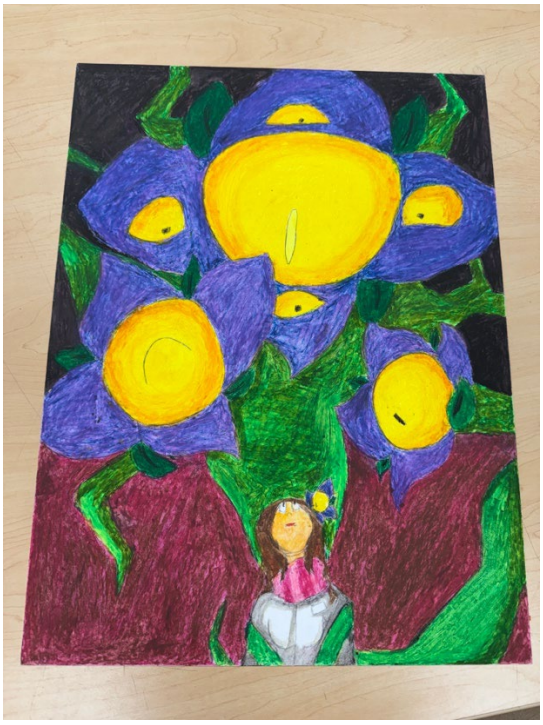


Persephone
Digital Photogrpahy, 20" x 24"
Plainview- Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

For my photography project, I chose Persephone from Greek mythology, who is the goddess of spring and vegetation and the queen of the Underworld. I chose Persephone because her story connects strongly to the changing of the seasons, which I represented throughout my photos. One of my images shows all four seasons in a circle to represent how Persephone's time between the Underworld and Earth creates the repeating cycle of the seasons. I wanted my photos to show both the beauty of nature and the darker side of Persephone's story while putting my own visual interpretation on the mythology.

Autumn Rubino



Staring into the Eyes of Misery
Oil Pastel, 15" x 20"
William Floyd High School

Artist Statement

I've always enjoyed the theme of mythological beasts and gods within fiction. I aspire to write in that genre in fact, and being an artist allows me to bring out my ideas into concievable pictures and visualize them for the world to see. When making this piece I was excited to be able to have the freedom to choose, and the medium of oil pastels was new to me so I used the opportunity to play around with it. Oil pastels are messy, and sometimes our emotions can be messy. I wanted my style to fully reflect through the piece, no matter how strange it may seem to others, I knew I wanted to be as expressive as possible when making my piece.

J[ustine] Shapiro



Night Shift
Oil Pastel on Paper, 9" x 12"
Plainview- Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

"Night Shift" depicts a rather dapper fox-man sitting surrounded by a forest shrouded in darkness and dusk. His primary job and goal is to protect the nocturnal creatures of the wilderness and watch over them as they rouse from their slumber and come alive under the moon's light. As he sits on his rock and oversees nighttime activity, he displays sophisticastion, patience, and dedication regarding his responsibilities; he has a job to do, and he will do it right. The idea of creating a "folklore"-esque character with such an important meaning is very appealing to me, as I love imagining, making, and designing characters in my free time! I was very inspired by the juror's quote where they talked about "...beautiful guardian spirits of forests and mountains who can either bless or curse someone based on their treatment of nature" while establishing this character. I also recently discovered my love for oil pastels and have gravitated towards them more and more, as they add so much vibrance and dimension that I can't help but be utterly obsessed with.

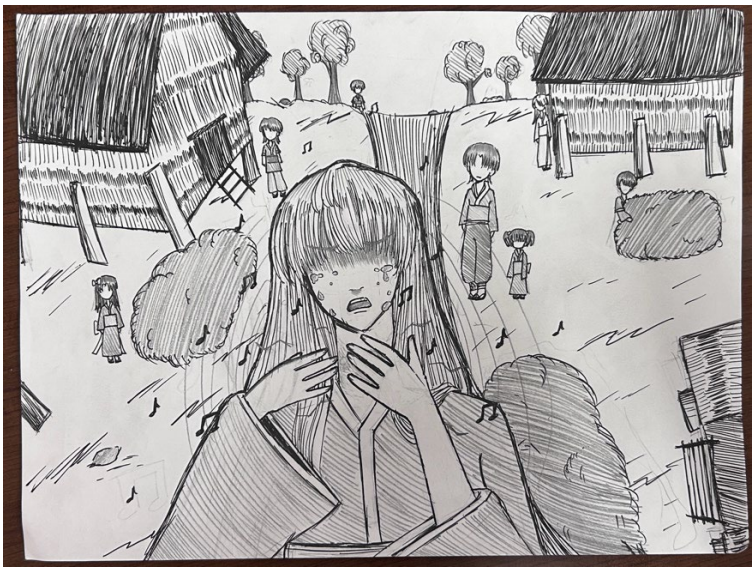
Rockwell Shin

The White Shadow
Adobe Illustrator, 12" x 8"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

The White Shadow constructs a horror scene rooted in the supernatural folklore of Korean culture. This work explores the psychological dread of a woman consumed by unspoken grief, trapped in a quiet domestic space while witnessing her inevitable transition into a haunting, ethereal spirit. Vector digital illustration was chosen as the medium to capture a level of surrealism, fine detail, and atmospheric depth that traditional media could not easily achieve; precise linework anchors the kneeling figure in physical reality, while complex digital brushwork and smooth gradients render the ghost in the mirror as a soft, translucent presence. Inspired by the juror's directive to weave personal cultural mythology into a horror concept, the composition turns a everyday household reflection into a unsettling threshold. This quote guided the artwork's core focus, choosing to highlight the quiet, lingering terror of ancestral fate over overt violence or monsters.

Laiba Siddiqui



The Cursed Sage
Graphite & Ink, 9" x 12"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School

Artist Statement

The story behind this art piece is, there was once a girl named Sarah, who lived among the common folk. Since childhood, she was praised and adored by the other villagers, so much so, that they called her "Singing Sage." Eventually, being treasured and cherished because of her voice made Singing Sage grow arrogant and greedy. On one especially curious day, a newcomer asked that she keep her voice down. Upon hearing this request, Singing Sage became confused and angry, and blatantly refused. However, the individual who made the request was a sorcerer, and was not pleased with her lack of courtesy. Thus, the sorcerer cursed Singing Sage to sing for eternity, no matter the cost. Over time, her throat started to burn excruciatingly, her vocal cords ripped, and she could not speak nor eat, all done while the voice that emanated from her throat remained youthful and enchanting, but the voice that everybody once praised and sought after would now be seen as a frightening curse. The moral is to be polite to those around you. This story was inspired by a tale a younger sibling made up and told me, with a few alterations.

Sonya Singh



Echos of the Dryad
Water Colored Paints, Colored Pencils and Contact Crayon on Watercolor Paper, 15" x 22"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

My work explores the idea of the fear of being forgotten through statue like figures that inhabit various places. Inspired by Gina Ienopoli's discussion of folklore as a way of "passing down moral lessons," I wanted my figures to represent more than something frightening; it serves as a visual warning about the passage of time. I chose to work with various mediums throughout my pieces. The qualities of the mediums allowed me to create a mystic effect, which helped establish the dark, surreal atmosphere I wanted. This connects to Ienopoli's own interest in portraying dark and moody themes in a way that is visually confrontational. The juror's reference to the "dangers of the unknown" particularly influenced my approach. Rather than revealing everything about the figures, I incorporated blurring backgrounds to leave parts of its story uncertain. Through these choices, I wanted the work to function like the folklore Ienopoli describes: a strange story that creates unease while leaving the viewer with a lesson to consider.

Drew Smiler



S'more Killings Await
Digital, 11" x 14"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

The Legend of Cropsey is a famous American cryptid story that is told all around the states, but most famously in summer camps. It's a famous story told by counselors to scare the kids from wandering off and to prevent them from going into areas where they aren't supposed to be. The underlying message of this story is for kids to not wander off because if they do, something bad could happen such as being killed by a walking nightmare. I chose this medium because the black and white of the photos give off this old timey, black and white movie feel that makes scenes feel more eerie, authentic and straight out of a horror film. The part of the Juror's quote that inspired me was the part where they talk about how Cryptids are supposed to teach a lesson which influence me to pick the Legend of Cropsey because it teaches a valuable to kids to not wander off because it still happens today and is a cause of many deaths and kidnappings.

Jacob Smilowitz



The Dragon's Dinner
Acrylic Paint, 9" x 12"
Planview Old-Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

My theme was look up from the phone because people are so obsessed with their phones they forget about their surroundings. Like the stories that were given in the quote I used fantasy creatures to create a story warning against to much phone.

Benjamin So



The ambush on the 불가사리

Digital Art - Clip Studio Paint EX, 24" x 48"
Northport High School

Artist Statement

This illustration is based on the Korean folklore of the 불가사리 or the Bulgasari which is a metal absorbent creature made by a Buddhist Monk that evolves from a rice grain all the way to a giant creature with an elephant trunk, a bull's tail, a bear's body, a tiger's claw, and the eyes of a rhinoceros and its name in korean means something impossible to kill or in chinese with the same spelling something that can be killed by fire. In the end as it gets burned alive the 불가사리 travels to a village and burns it down with it. Overall the theme of the folklore is the dangers of an unchecked problem and how it can escalate into a much bigger problem. I chose this media because of how this folklore can be still brought to life with art alongside how important the message of this can be. The Juror's quote inspired me and influenced my approach to the creation of my work due to the asian representation of folklore which intrigued me and the idea of creating a piece based on folklore that the Juror presented in their piece which reminded me of the story of the 불가사리 I learned during covid. It was like hitting two birds with one stone since it was a way to connect to my culture and background while also influencing me more to create such a piece even if there weren't many references in american google nor a modern recreation of the creature that matches with the description. But the process of designing the 불가사리 from scratch for this Exhibition although took a lot of concepts and preperation, it made it worthwhile and more fun to experiment with and to create this piece.

Amalie Specht

Shadow
Charcoal on Paper, 12" x `6"
Harborfields High School

Artist Statement

My work explores how our minds can create our biggest fears, especially when we are alone in the dark. The creature in my artwork is called the Shadow, and it represents the fear of the unknown. It lives in the mind and only appears in darkness, taking the shape of whatever someone is afraid of. I chose a dark forest as the setting because the trees and shadows make the environment feel mysterious and unsettling. I used charcoal to create dark values, strong contrast, and shading throughout the piece. I also made the Shadow larger than the person to show how fear can feel bigger and more powerful than it really is.

Jame Sperber



What Remains
Watercolor and Marker, 11" x 14"
Northport High School

Artist Statement

When creating my piece, What Remains, I was inspired by the Diwata stories which "advocate respect towards the Earth and one's environment." because I enjoy being outside and spending time in nature. I wanted to create a piece that reflected my appreciation for the natural world. I created a forest guardian who lives in the last remaining tree of a once rich forest that had been destroyed by the relentless growth of a city. With every tree that is cut down the guardian becomes angrier and more desperate, feeling each tree being cut down as a part of itself being taken away. I chose to have the guardian looking like it is part of the tree to show its deep connection to the forest and its role as protector which dissipates with every tree that is cut down. The contrast between the enormous tree and the surrounding dull buildings represents the conflict between nature and urban sprawl. The still green leaves on the tree represent how the guardian is still fighting to protect what little he has left. Through this piece, I wanted to show how our actions can permanently change the world around us –for better or worse– even when we don't immediately see the effects.

Ivy Stallone



Laura
Darkroom Photo, 8" x 10"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

Carmilla is a gothic novella by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. It is about a young woman named Laura who is targeted by a vampire who's name is Carmilla. The novella includes themes of romantic obsession and the duality of good and evil. This piece includes a girl in white, which represents Laura longing for Carmilla. It also showcases Laura's naive nature, causing Laura to be easily manipulated by Carmilla.

Chris Stanforth



Circe
Digital Illustration, 8" x 10"
Huntington High School

Artist Statement

My artwork is a drawing of Circe from The Odyssey. Circe is a witch who turns Odysseus's men into pigs after they eat the food she gives them. Since she is a witch, I made her look unsettling and mysterious to show the danger she represents. The caws in the background represent her sister warning the men not to eat the food. I wanted my artwork to show the idea that you should be careful when accepting food from other people because you may not know their intentions. I used Circe's unsettling appearance and the caws as a warning to represent the danger hidden behind something that may seem harmless.

Jennifer Sukhram



Beware of Your Surroundings, You Never Know Who's There
Marker & Colored Pencil, 9" x 12"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School

Artist Statement

The piece of artwork presented is about more then just a girl at night, in the forest. It's about a girl who is to amused by the moon to pay attention to her surroundings. She is surrounded by evil eyes while she is paying so much attention to the moon. Art is able to create deep meaning illustrations with a free mind. The inspiration for this artwork was based on me, I am usually to focused on one thing then to pay attention to other things. Because of this I never really am aware of my surroundings, so this is how my art piece was inspired.

Marayam Tariq



The Mystery in the Cave
Marker, 9" x 12"
Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School

Artist Statement

I wanted to show how people judge things without understanding the truth. I chose this media because I like to try new things. I have never really done scary stuff before so I wanted to challenge myself.

Franklin Tobias



The Cat Golem
Clay with Acrylic Paint, 4" x 4" x 4"
Long Island Whole Child Academy for Twice Exceptional Children

Artist Statement

I made a Golem that protects cats. If you don't know what a golem is, it is a traditional figure in Jewish folklore. It is a protector of what you want to protect. It is made out of clay and the Hebrew letters for TRUTH make it come to life and protect. I decided to use clay because it is an art medium I am good at and Golems are traditionally made out of clay.

I decided to make a golem that protects cats because I volunteer at a cat shelter with my mom. I have seen how much these cats suffer at the hands of humans and feel these animals need someone to protect them.

The story of the Diwata who was a guardian spirit that can bless or curse someone based upon how they treat nature inspired me. The Golem is a lot like a Diwata. Its purpose is to inspire respect for a cause, in this case, cats!

Alicia Trischler



Her Woest Nightmare
Mixed Media, 9" x 12"
Valley Stream South High School

Artist Statement

My artwork, Her Worst Nightmare, portrays the theme of regret and fear. I was inspired by the artist Gina Ienopoli's art piece " A Prosperous Home" in that her work reminds me of a creature in a trance under some from a magical source. I chose to do my work in mixed media in bright colors to represent the chaos that haunts people nightmares. In my work, the main subject is being held against her will by a magical tree that upon touching shows the worst possible outcome of your future. I feel that Ienopoli's quote about her work, which talks about folklore relates to my art in that there are so many folklore stories that have themes of magic, and I feel my work has a haunting magical tone to it.

Kiki Tzoumas



Playtime
Digital Photography, 20" x 16" x 1"
Wheatley High School

Artist Statement

My work explores the idea that fear can be in ordinary environments. In both photographs, I attempted to instill fear by turning everyday objects into something unsettling. The photograph shows a young woman holding a disturbing doll, creating a troubling image of an act that is usually seen as ordinary. I chose photography as my medium because it allows me to create realistic images and as an ability to display my creativity through photos. The juror's quote inspired me to create a story that could be passed down like a traditional folktale. The examples of the Tiyanak and Diwata demonstrate how mythical creatures can represent warnings and teach lessons. I incorporated this idea into my second photo by creating a doll that warns against blindly trusting what appears harmless. The photographs show the consequences of encountering the creature and allows the viewer to piece together its story. Ultimately, my work suggests that appearances can be deceiving and that curiosity can sometimes lead people into situations they cannot easily escape.

Hailey Voorhest



The Squirrel-Bat
Pencil, Watercolor, Micron fineliner pen, 12" x 18"
Walt Whitman High School

Artist Statement

Have you ever been in the deep dark woods and felt like you were being watched? That feeling of being watched is the Squirrel-Bat. The Squirrel-Bat is a creature that has the body of a flying squirrel, the ears of a fennec fox, wings like a bat, and eyes that glow like fireflies in the night. The Squirrel-Bats live in deep woods and dark caves. The Squirrel-Bats travel in groups to dark uncrowded areas. The Squirrel-Bats are easily startled and have a fear of humans, this is why they often watch humans. The Squirrel-Bat is most easily spotted by their glowing eyes in the dark.

Gabriella Wegert



The Forbidden Brew
Mixed Media, 6.5 inches tall
Half Hollow Hills East High School

Artist Statement

My artwork is a creepy cauldron inspired by folklore, storytelling, and mythical creatures. I wanted my cauldron to look like something that could belong in a mysterious folklore story. The green bubbles, fake candy, eyeball, bone, and spoon make it look like someone is creating a strange and possibly dangerous potion. I wanted the viewer to wonder who made it, what is inside, and what could happen if someone used it. I chose clay as the main material because I could shape it into the form of a cauldron. I also used paint, foam balls, beads, hot glue, tissue paper, and markers to add details and make the cauldron look more interesting and magical. The different materials helped me create textures and objects that would not have been possible with clay alone. The part of the juror's statement that inspired me was the idea that folklore from different cultures tells captivating stories that are passed down through generations and often contain moral lessons. I was also inspired by the examples of the Tiyanak and Diwata, especially how mythical beings can be mysterious and can either help or harm people depending on their actions. I used those ideas when creating my cauldron by making it look like an object from a larger story. The eyeball and bone represent the darker and more dangerous side of folklore, while the candy adds a surprising and almost playful element. The green bubbles make the potion seem magical and unknown. Like the folklore stories mentioned by the juror, I wanted my artwork to make the viewer imagine a story behind what they see. Overall, my cauldron represents the mysterious and sometimes dangerous world of folklore. I wanted it to feel like something you might discover in a story about a mythical creature or witch, where there is more happening than what you can see at first.

Charlotte Wells

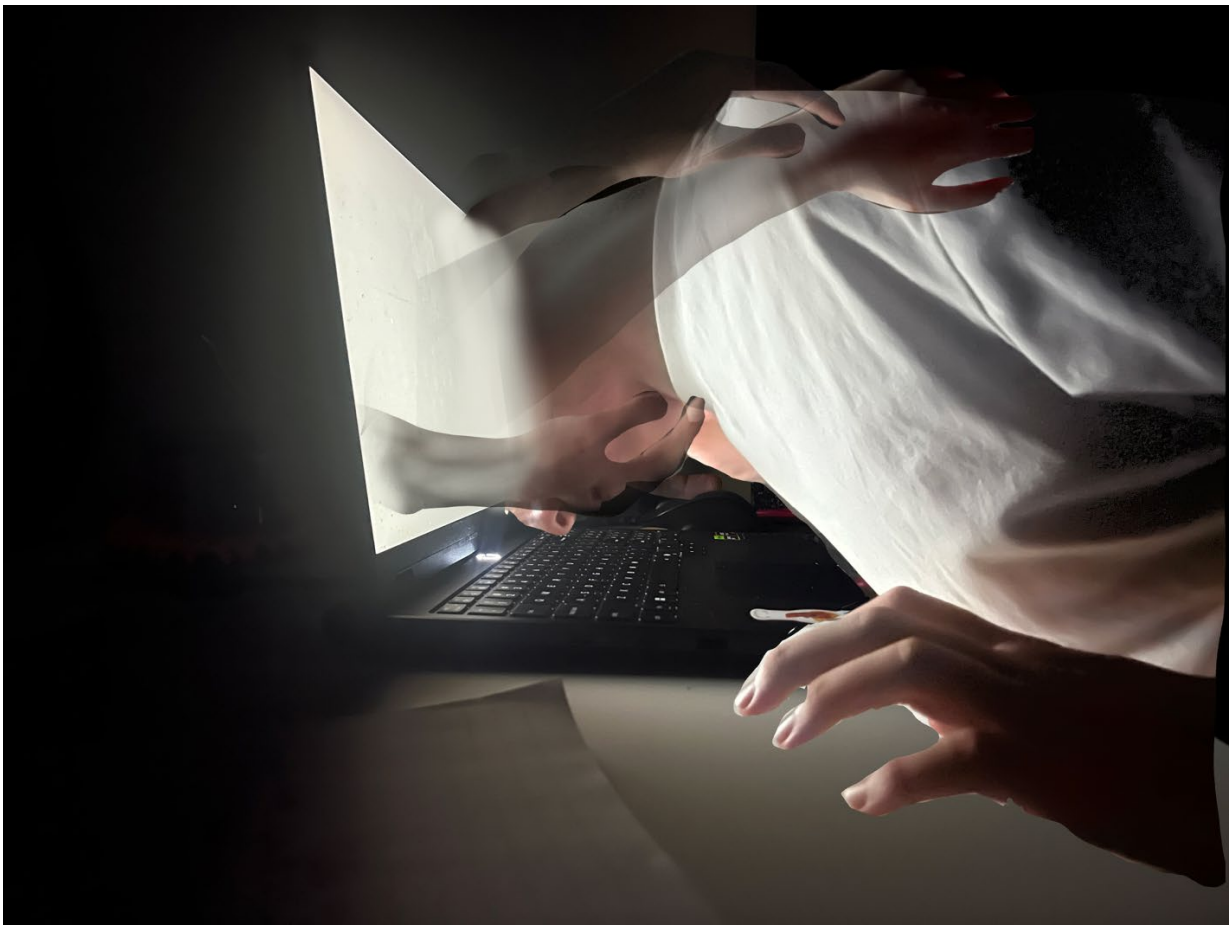


2016
Pencil, 9" x 12"
Cold Spring Harbor High School

Artist Statement

A common theme of childhood nightmares are clowns, myself included. So I felt the best thing to encompass the idea of nightmares to be a clown.

Mingjie Yang



Digital Monster
Digital Photo, 8" x 10"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

the internet and electronics wasn't just simply getting used by people, but are truly intruding people's life. the boundary of the reality and internet have blurred as people became more dependent on the internet.

Adian Yao



Faded Memory
Darkroom Photography, 10" x 8"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

The Backrooms as a medium can generally be interpreted in a numerous amount of ways, but the interpretation of the Backrooms I personally like the most is the depiction of the weird world it is as a reflection of the past, and as well as a reflection of how it can become wrongful or even dangerous it is to keep dwelling and staying in the past without moving on. The idea of the same image from people's minds being repeated and replicated over and over again from dwelling in it til' the memory itself is only fragments is fascinating to me, and the movie made by Kane Parsons really seals in this ideal of the Backrooms I simply can't move on from too easily. Kinda ironic to say the least. I generally tried to depict this by attempting to have a pretty simple photo that isn't too complicated, but it could be something that many might accidentally recognize despite it not being exactly something they've seen before; to almost make it feel like the viewer is dwelling on a past memory of possible childhood even, and the stairway to my basement just was seemingly perfect for it and especially with the slightly dim light shining in. One last thing about this bit of horror "folklore" (it's closer to media but I'd argue it can fit the criteria of folklore in some aspects) is how it generally connected with me, and especially after watching the movie for the Backrooms

Matthew Yerys



Blossvulbun's Blossoms
Watercolor, 12" x 18"
Walt Whitman High School

Artist Statement

When the snow melts and the sun shines, it's the job of the Blossvulbun to ensure the flowers bloom in time for spring. That mysterious time between the melting of snow and when the flowers are in full bloom, that time is the Blossvulbun's playground, when it just prances along. Wherever it steps, flowers bloom from its paws, ensuring fields stay pretty and colorful all Spring long. This mysterious creature, a mix of a fox, bunny, and sakura blossoms, bounces around under the sun, to ensure nature's beauty never dies after the harsh cold winters. Wherever it goes, wherever it's needed, whenever flowers seem to bloom overnight, that is the Blossvulbun, bouncing with delight.

Avery Yopp



The Shadow Hound
Silver emulsion print with digital editing, 16" x 20"
Half Hollow Hills East High School

Artist Statement

My name is Avery. I'm a photographer at Half Hollow Hills High School East. I love shooting sports photography and experimenting with film and digital cameras. This piece was a burned negative. I abstracted and altered the original image of a skeleton dog; I added color digitally and originally printed it in the darkroom. Born from the forest's darkness, the Shadow Hound appears when people disrespect nature or enter places they don't belong. Its glowing eyes and skeletal body warn those who ignore the world around them. According to the legend, the hound does not attack; it follows those who harm nature until they understand the consequences of their actions. His story teaches us to respect nature, because every action we take can leave a lasting mark on the world around us.

Dakota Yutesler



La Llorona
Darkroom Photography, 8" x 10"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

La Llorona is from Mexican and ancient Aztec folklore of a woman who drowns her children in a river out of grief and rage, before dying herself. The myth is that she wanders around the riverbank crying for her children. I chose this media to photograph since it shows how you can do something out of rage or grief in the heat of the moment and regret it forever. A quote from the juror that inspired me was "The Tiyanak stories warn against rashness..." which helped me choose this story.

Zhien Zheng



Naivety At It's Finest
Ink, 9" x 12"
Plainview Old-Bethpage John. F Kennedy High School

Artist Statement

The overall effect that viewers should feel while observing is how easily and quickly naivety and innocence of a person can affect their perception of a person, environment, and their own survival in a dangerous situation. While thinking about what to draw for the contest, the original idea came from how as a child, my world consisted of many fairytales, with the most common trope being an evil witch tricking a little girl for her own gain. While reading about how artists should incorporate parts of their own world into their art, it made me think back to this time again. The quote helped shape the idea and ways of how some peoples worlds can also be built on stories they hear from their life.

Melanie Zhu



MORPH
Digital Photogtaphy, 11" x 14"
Syosset High School

Artist Statement

Weretigers, in Chinese mythology, are depicted as both half-human and half-tiger, being able to shift into either form as pleased. They're associated with violence; cruel and vicious in nature, weretigers are a terrifying figure in Chinese tales. However, in recent times, it's been depicted in a more docile form, most famously, as a pillow plush or in paintings. It's a cuter take on the terrifying creature, and such a concept was inspiring to encapture. With photography, such was possible- along with photoshop, the shadows and highlights were able to capture the "adorable" pillow in a villain-like light.