



### Nations Better Together 2022

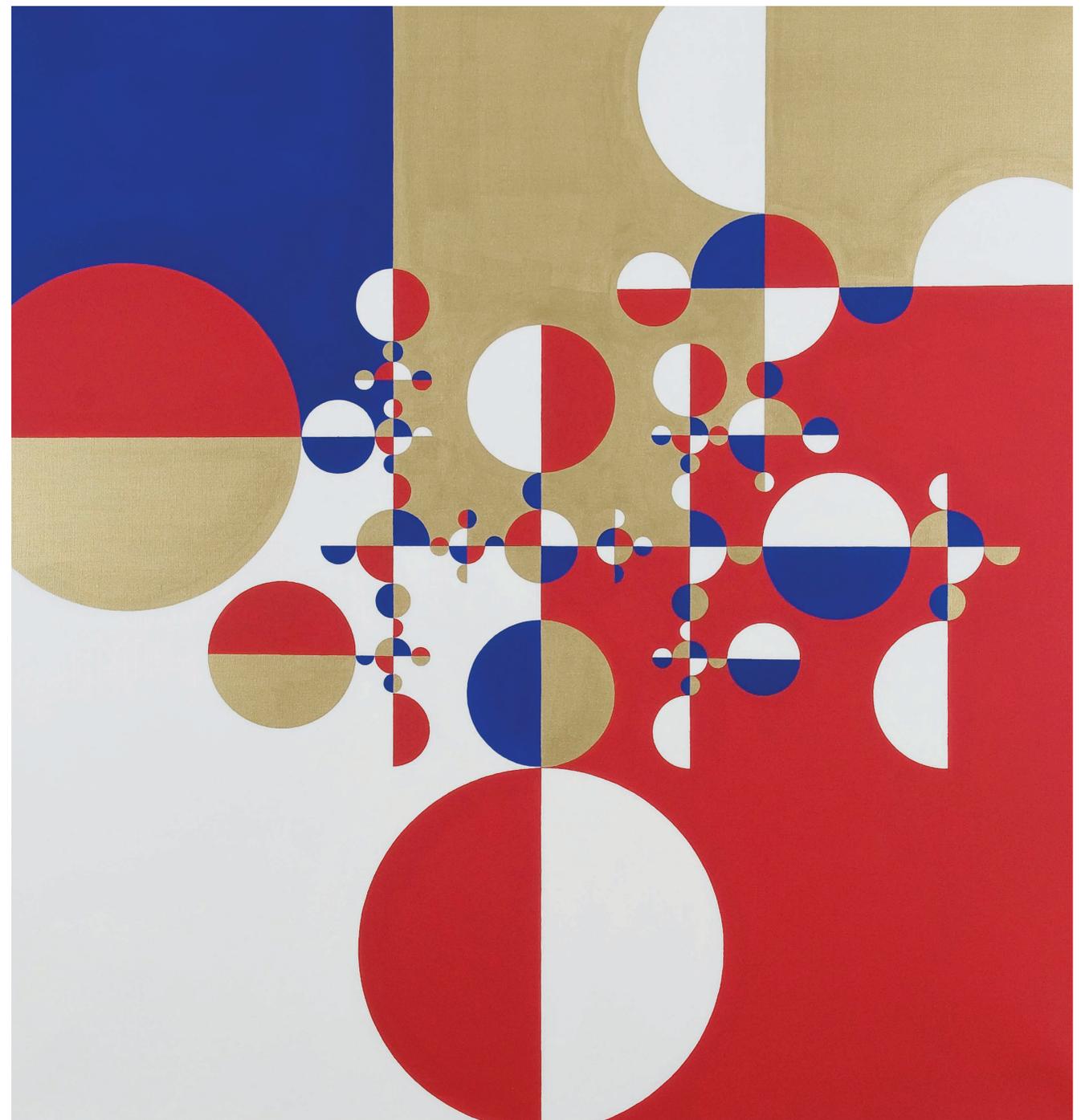
No matter your nationality, you are loved. I had lots of fun making this artwork and wanted to add detail by adding eyes and glasses. I like looking at flags a lot and I practice drawing them. I feel confident in drawing, and flags to me represent who you are. I was inspired by the pattern in Gabriel Orozco's painting *Samurai Tree*. My favorite part of my artwork is how each flag has its own personality. It was a challenge to remember all the flags' colors and patterns. I want people to know that you can be inspired no matter what!

INSPIRED BY  
GABRIEL OROZCO  
*Samurai Tree (Invariant 1)* 2005



**JUAN BANDA-RAMOS**

4th grade  
Findley Elementary School



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GABRIEL OROZCO (Mexican, born 1962)  
*Samurai Tree (Invariant 1)* 2005  
"Lascaux" acrylic on linen  
Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 2006.8



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### Beauty of the Forest 2023

There is always going to be color where you look. The base of my sculpture is inspired by *Wavelength* by Donté Hayes in its texture and shape. I wanted to add color and my own imagination as it grew up. I wanted to incorporate the feeling of wanting to be in nature. I knew before starting the project that I wanted to work in clay, and I was surprised that this artwork was made of clay because of its small details. I liked getting my hands dirty because I don't get to do that often. I want people looking at my work to learn that there is always going to be light; it is not just going to be dark.

INSPIRED BY  
DONTÉ HAYES  
*Wavelength* 2021

**ESMERALDA  
RAMIREZ JURADO**

4th grade  
Findley Elementary School



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DONTÉ HAYES (American, born 1975)  
**Wavelength** 2021  
Ceramic (stoneware, black clay body)  
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections;  
Purchased with funds from the Edmundson Art Foundation, Inc., 2022.7



**AVA NEWSOME**  
5th grade  
Findley Elementary School

**New Perspective 2023**

When looking at my artwork I want people to notice that the artwork isn't perfect. Some people think that artwork has to be perfect, but nothing in life is. My sculpture was inspired by the color and vibrancy of a painting called *Whirl* by Kenneth Noland. I did my best to match the colors of my sculpture with the painting. I like to imagine things are different, a different perspective, seeing something flat as three-dimensional so I can see all around it. I love how my finished sculpture looks like it's floating. My favorite part of making it was seeing how it all came together. I think it is important to see things from a different perspective,

like if you are worried about something, seeing it in a different way can help you change your mind.

INSPIRED BY  
KENNETH NOLAND  
*Whirl* 1960



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KENNETH NOLAND (American, 1924 - 2010)  
*Whirl* 1960  
Acrylic on canvas  
Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust;  
Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1974.7



**KARLA GUZMAN**  
8th grade  
Harding Middle School

### Mexican Dress 2023

Look at how the dress resembles an empty field. Then view the colors of flowers, rows, and sets of string. My artwork represents the Mexican culture. Just as the land was found empty and then turned into a new life for settlers, this piece is a combination of utilizing nature and skill.

My artwork is made from canvas cloth, artificial flowers and peppers, and painted clay pots. The person who inspired me was the artist Ebony G. Patterson. My work expresses a social issue through the many colors, patterns, and character of Mexican culture. I wanted my work to be brave and attention seeking. Before my

final piece, I had many ideas and was struggling with the direction of the project. I want to thank my mom for helping me and teaching me how to sew. Throughout this process I learned many new skills and information about my background. This piece influences my future artworks by telling a story, not just a big idea—but what's behind it.

Art is a place where you can be honest. It speaks more words than any statement. It is the piece that you view, but also an entire background. It is filled with the desires and the emotions of the artist that created it.

INSPIRED BY  
EBONY G. PATTERSON  
**...among the blades between the flowers... while the horse watches... for those who bear/bare witness 2018**



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EBONY G. PATTERSON (Jamaican, born 1981)  
**...among the blades between the flowers... while the horse watches... for those who bear/bare witness 2018**  
Hand-cut jacquard woven photo tapestry with glitter, appliqué, beads, trim, brooches, feathered butterflies, fabric, silk flowers, and hand-embellished resin owl on shelf, on artist-designed fabric wallpaper  
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Edmundson Art Foundation, Inc., 2019.3.a-c



### World Reclaimed (post apocalypse) 2022

I was inspired by *Ladder* by Yayoi Kusama. I was also inspired by fungus and the TV show, "The Last of Us." I used Model Magic clay and a highchair with some artificial moss and paints. I made it beautiful with the help of my parents and boyfriend. They supported and encouraged me throughout this whole project and I couldn't have done it without them.

Throughout this project, I was thinking about what it would look like if we all died. What would happen? We have ruined this earth, so what would happen to it if we all died and left the earth to the plants and animals? Let them

take back what is theirs? Allow Mother Nature to reclaim it? This project is what I can see happening; maybe just through one person's eyes, giving us the sense of what we stole. I hope this artwork inspires people to stop what they are doing to the earth, taking what is not ours to take.

INSPIRED BY  
YAYOI KUSAMA  
*Ladder* 1963



**AIDAN ALLEN**  
8th grade  
Harding Middle School



YAYOI KUSAMA (Japanese, born 1929)  
**Ladder** 1963  
Mixed media  
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections;  
Gift of Hanford Yang, New York, 1970.38



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**Untitled 2023**

My artwork is usually something I don't describe to others. I like when people voice their opinions. They could be completely wrong about the meaning behind it, but it's fun to see the different perspectives that people have.

My process in creating this piece was difficult to endure, going through many changes. My inspiration was an architectural detail in the Des Moines Art Center. It also reminds me of my friend. I know my artwork often has people stopping in their tracks, and I wanted to capture that moment again, even though my inspiration for this was a little unorthodox.

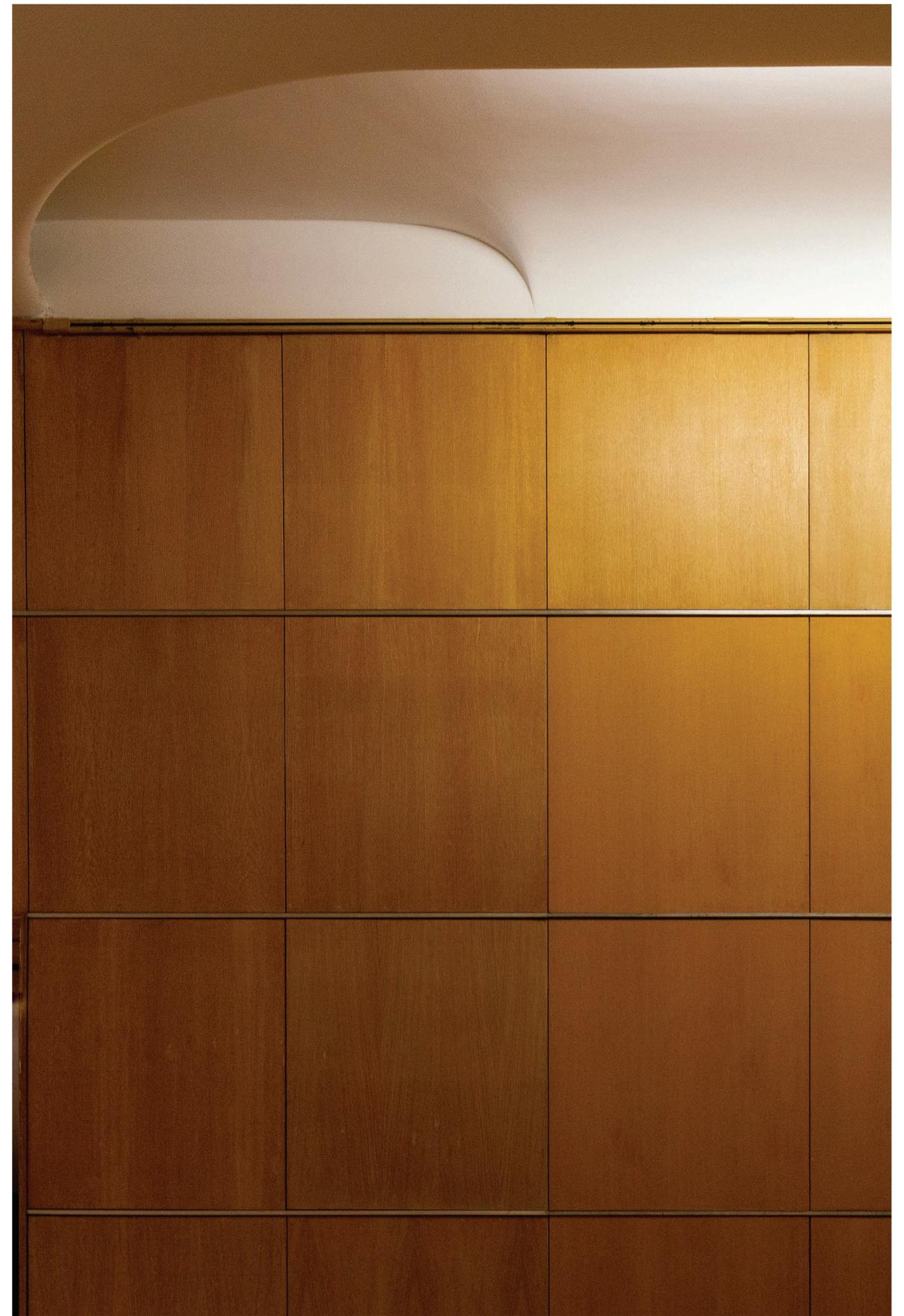
INSPIRED BY

**Des Moines Art Center  
Eliel Saarinen building lobby  
architectural detail**



**RADIANCE BROWN**

8th grade  
Harding Middle School



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**Des Moines Art Center Eliel Saarinen  
building lobby architectural detail**  
Photo: Matthew Perkins



### One Thing 2023

I would like people to notice whatever it is they see when looking at this art piece. It is a drawing of lines and shapes that represent a picture. I was inspired by *Hurricane from the south* by artist Arnaldo Roche-Rabell.

I just draw, draw, draw, draw. Things can always improve, that's why my pieces evolve. Art has no meaning. I think I'm not sure of anything when I draw. It evolves. Drawing is very hard. I just can't really find myself in drawing. The more I draw, the more I depart from myself. If you look at a leaf, you'll miss the tree. If you look at the tree, you'll miss the forest. I think change is good. In other words, I think improvement is

always good. Mistakes happen, allowing you to learn and make it better, to add just one more thing.

INSPIRED BY  
ARNALDO ROCHE-RABELL  
*Hurricane from the south* 1991

**DAY CHIT**  
8th grade  
Harding Middle School



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ARNALDO ROCHE-RABELL (American and Puerto Rican, 1955 - 2018)  
*Hurricane from the south* 1991  
Oil on canvas  
Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin  
Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 2021.22



**EH THAW**  
9th grade  
North High School

### Lost Mind 2023

Sometimes you just can't think and need art to let your thoughts flow. Chess is a game where your brain is your strongest player, just like in reality. The sculpture inspired me to make a piece that gave me comfort. With this piece my thoughts took over and it gave each piece a different meaning of how it represented me. The knight shows my bravery and the queen represents what I've gone through. I see the queen as me; the eldest child in my family, a lot of responsibility was on my shoulders. That is who the queen is.

With this piece, I wanted to also collide the Art Center and the Pappajohn Sculpture Park. I

remember seeing *Spider* by artist Louise Bourgeois in the sculpture park for the first time. It stood out. It represented me as I see it as a piece that is different from the others, but didn't let its difference stop them from being them. This is something I still struggle with.

This piece, my piece, will always represent me and go beyond first thoughts. Sometimes overthinking is good.

INSPIRED BY  
LOUISE BOURGEOIS  
*Spider* 1997



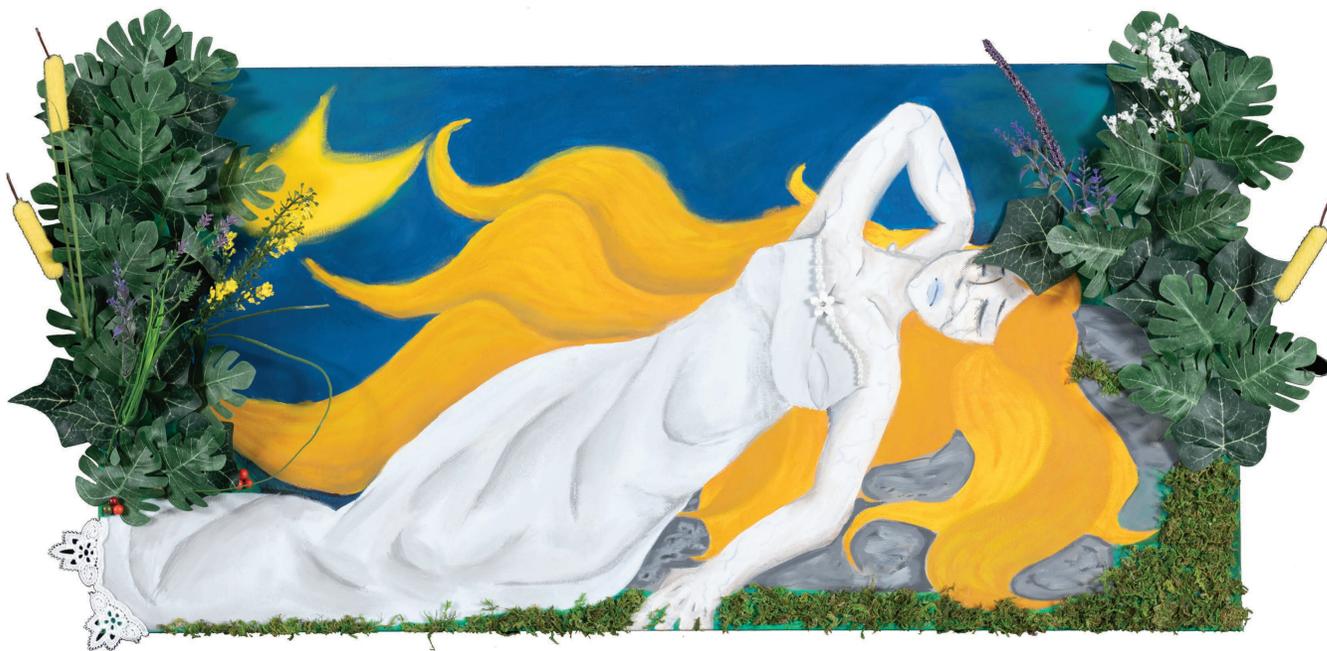
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LOUISE BOURGEOIS (French-American, 1911 - 2010)  
*Spider* 1997  
Bronze  
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections;  
Gift of John and Mary Pappajohn, 2013.1



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**ISAURA  
CONSTANTINE**  
10th grade  
North High School

### The Death of Aphrodite 2023

*The Death of Aphrodite* is inspired by Per Kirkeby's *Untitled* piece from 2013 (one of many). When I first analyzed his piece I hardly felt a connection, rather I felt a fleeting grace of beauty before I moved on. As I had to choose a piece to be inspired by, I picked his, despite the lack of warmth I had felt at the time and despite other alluring choices.

The process of creating my piece was long, but only stressful in the last quarter. I had initially painted her hair first, but it took me until a week and a half away from the deadline that I

really made progress to make her blossom into what she is. During that week and a half I had grown to hate the piece for having to make it. But afterwards I grieved a little, having given it over for photography and such. I missed my piece.

To me, this piece is her, the woman, Aphrodite. Personally, I feel connected to the mythological goddess Aphrodite. Not in a way in which she is physical, but rather as a symbol and force. I believe that this piece is her – the femininity she represents, the beauty she represents, dying in the beauty in which she

flourished. It takes time and thought to find the beauty in Per Kirkeby's piece, but I feel as though my piece drags out what I felt when I did think about his piece.

I dedicate my piece to the solace I find in femininity and most importantly my mom, Ashley, for helping me find solace in my own femininity.

INSPIRED BY  
PER KIRKEBY  
*Untitled* 2013



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PER KIRKEBY (Danish, 1938 – 2018)  
*Untitled* 2013  
Oil on canvas with artist frame  
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections;  
Purchased with funds from John and Mary Pappajohn, 2021.127



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**NAOMI GRAVES**

10th grade  
North High School

**self reflection 2023**

My artwork is made up of separate portraits and facial features across a few different canvases connected by a string of vines.

This piece reflects how other people view me as opposed to how I view myself. When I show people my artwork, they see it in a much better light than I do. I've never been satisfied with my work and I see myself physically in a similar way. I always find something flawed in my artwork and myself and it frustrates me how people can overlook these flaws easier than I can. I am not satisfied with this piece. I see every bump and every speck of dust. I know it's

a decent piece of art, but I'll always keep working on it in dissatisfaction.

This piece also reflects how different the original black mirror is from normal mirrors. It forces you to look at yourself in a different form and make sense of how the mirror interprets you.

INSPIRED BY  
FRED WILSON  
**Iago's Mirror** 2009



FRED WILSON (American, born 1954)  
**Iago's Mirror** 2009  
Murano glass  
Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust;  
Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 2013.3



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**MADISON LARUE**  
10th grade  
North High School

### Who 2023

My art piece *Who* was inspired by Wangechi Mutu's piece called *Water Woman*. I loved her bold features and the way she made me wonder so many things while simply being by her. I created *Who* by using clay and a wooden base. She has many cracks throughout, some are filled with vines for more texture. She also has an alien in her head which can symbolize anything. Creating *Who* was one big challenge; I have never fully used clay especially with a project this big. I watched many videos for different techniques to use on her and even then I was not very satisfied with her. I wanted *Who* to be

mysterious. I wanted you to wonder what she is, why certain features are there, what her purpose was. I wanted you to build your own connection and story with her. My only goals while creating her were to make a piece that could fit in any situation, but also stand for women in some way while also making her fit in my own artistic standards and to improve my skills with clay. I do believe I reached my goals even though throughout making her I grew a strong hatred for her. I spent many, many days with her. I created her in my room, so I slept with her staring at me every night. I even spent

many nights staring back at her, analyzing her and wondering why she looks the way she does. She is not exactly how I imagined her in my head, but since she still reached my goals, I am somewhat satisfied.

INSPIRED BY  
WANGECHI MUTU  
*Water Woman* 2017



WANGECHI MUTU (Kenyan, active United States, born 1972)  
*Water Woman* 2017  
Bronze  
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Edmundson Art Foundation, Inc., 2017.25



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### Naked 2023

This is a painting you were not meant to see. My art piece was inspired by *Composition in Three Figures* by Leon Kröll. I've always been captivated by the woman staring straight ahead in the painting. It looks as though she is aware of you and challenging you. I took this feeling and expanded upon it. My entire painting is staring at you and pleading. This piece is a personal reckoning with my experience as an adopted Chinese American immigrant who is a survivor of abuse, constantly being brutalized, whitewashed, and hushed. This is terror that will never leave me, so I put it on a canvas.

I wanted to challenge myself, and in doing so I have completely stripped myself of pride, like an open wound to be naked without shame. Viewers may interpret it in anyway they see fit, but it will always be mine.

INSPIRED BY  
LEON KRÖLL  
*Composition in Three Figures* 1928



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LEON KRÖLL (American, 1884 – 1974)  
*Composition in Three Figures* 1928  
Oil on canvas  
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased by  
the Des Moines Association of Fine Arts Purchase Fund, 1930.1