



DARK TO LIGHT

*AN ART EXHIBIT BENEFITING THE
ASHLEIGH LANGBEIN PROJECT*

AUGUST 5TH- SEPTEMBER 19TH 2020



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SPOTLIGHT GALLERY AT THE ARTS DEPOT
ABINGDON, VIRGINIA

Curated by Paula Langbein and Rayn Singree

The Ashleigh Langbein Project is a public 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization honoring Ashleigh Nicole Langbein, through assisting college students in obtaining their goals for a successful life. The current donations will be in the form of two endowments at Emory and Henry College.

These endowments are in the fields of Ashleigh's degree, Psychology and Theater. ALP strives to continue Ashleigh's work in future projects as she would have changed the world. To learn more about the ALP, please visit ashleighlangbeinproject.org



Ashleigh loved art, all forms of art.

The first sentence along sums up how Ash felt about personal creation.

The artist, the writer, the performer, a trilogy of personas that she felt we all possess and use to create who we are; to tell our story.

Some are literal in their usage, finding pages for others to read, visuals for us to see; to show the world something different.

This is what Ash endeavored to know, whether her words brought forth an emotion or thought in others. It is with this idea that the idea for the Dark to Light art exhibit was born.

The Ashleigh Langbein Project was started with the same desire to bring forth something new to the world.

Our current goal is not only to continue sharing her with the world, but to establish ways to keep her work, passions, and spirit moving forward.

The Dark to Light exhibit brings Ashleigh's word to life through the minds and hands of these amazing artists.

Each one of them have eagerly volunteered their talents and love to help raise funds for an Endowment benefiting the Arts Department at Emory & Henry College.

As you look at the works presented here, and read Ashleigh's words that inspired them, know that Dark to Light brings everything that Ashleigh was to so many people to life.

A stage is dark until the first spot hits, a book is dark until the first page read, a canvas is dark until the first brush stroke...

Three Years

*A moving Navy ship,
A change with every year.
I am from nowhere.*



Payton Spencer, *Cliffside Return*, oil on canvas, 2020

I personally feel like a passing ship, moving within the seasons and enduring the challenges each one brings. It seems that no matter where

I came from, I does not matter, but who I become. The line, "I am from nowhere" speaks to me and my levels of self identity I thought I had and the changes I have made to my appearance to match the labels

my associates have made of my image. I am the ship, and I have a world to travel, in order to discover who I really am.



Sarah Heikkinen, *Voyager*, ink on paper, 2020

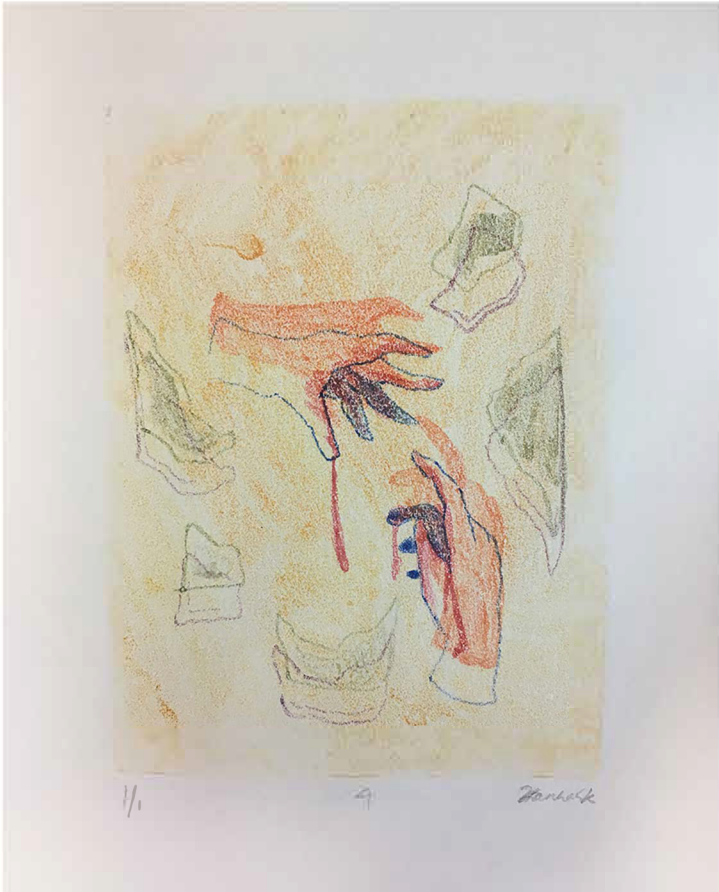
It is my hope that this work will embody the consistent voyage that defined much of Langbein's youth and those struggles faced of having home constantly being somewhere new and unknown.

Jabberwocky-

Breaking a glass – smash!

To drink what is within it

To scurry and hide.

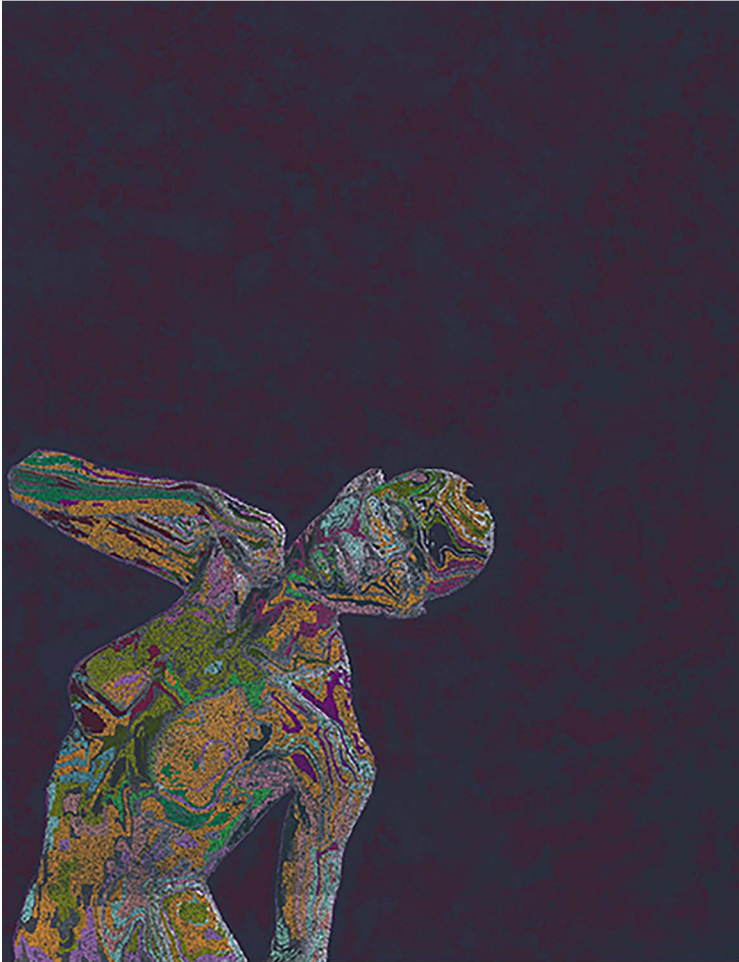


Hannah Kogut- 4, watercolor monotype, 2020

This poem interested me the most because of how short it is. I enjoy the brevity, and think that there is something powerful in just what a few words can say.

Douleur-

*Dry eyes – see the birds,
Chirping to break my heart.
She lays there. So Still.*



Brian Stanley- *Pulse*, digital painting, 2020

*When reading the poem *Douleur*, the title, and the third line about stillness really spoke to me. I wanted to create something that I felt represented both the pain and stillness found within the lines. I am always drawn to a more muted color palette and pairing it with a textured background felt natural to represent this poem. Placing the figure in a more graceful pose helped me create the pain felt in stillness.*

Torture at its Finest-

*Purgatory is for the still,
Those questioning and waiting in
their personal perdition.
Their inner sanction blinding thoughts to a close.
Personal hell is immobility.*

*Control refuted.
That burning sensation- scorching the lungs,
eyes, minds, tongues, and hearts.
Veins disintegrate and blood boils.
Yet they stay, giving no evidence
Of this punishment.
They deserve this?
But what did they do?
They never moved.*



Amber Wilkins, *The Plight of Eris*, charcoal on paper, 2020

*I relate to this poem because it represents the inner battles people are dealing with.
They can be going through hell and no one can see it on the outside.
I can relate to the feeling of being stuck in place, so I wanted to represent that.*



Kat Rendleman, *An Ideal Panic*, acrylic on canvas, 2020

This poem inspired me to think of the effects of mental health.

The Shadow

Daily Prayer

May the Gods strip this from me.
May any God that will listen please tear me
of my consciousness and bare all
of what I should be.

Ravish me of this pit within
for I can only thrive without.
With any intention you wish to use
upon me I am yours, mighty fate.

Keep your secrets from me.
Keep every mask I own and do not let me
use them. When the time is right,
shove it down my throat so that I may
never be able to rid of it until you snatch
It back out from my depths.

Let every emotion the world lay unto me be cast
out from my soul. Take my world and all of me
with it. Possess me in your fury and your love,
but never let me feel it. For I may use your gifts
to remove each piece of sanity from my self-righteousness.
This glorious gift that I may never hurt others but I
may only destroy this vessel that could be yours.
I'm not worthy of this all.

Not worthy of this present of love, of words, of voice
and of song. You bestowed this upon me for what purpose?
That I may use them to play myself a fool?!

I say how foolish of YOU! You CHOSE to use this pawn in
such a ridiculous fashion. Lay your presents on my bed so
when I rest I will wake no more.

I command it now! You let this world be mine when it was
not I that asked for it. You refuse to possess me, but you refuse
to give me the tools to play your left hand. ANY God that will listen,
I will drop to my very knees and burn out the flame of my pride.
I will burn my very flesh for it to fall from me so that I may
cease control of what should have NEVER been mine.

You're laughing, aren't you?

Laughing at the LACK of strings you control over such a
creature. A simple human being cannot bear worldliness,
Atlas must shift! You smile ear to ear at this
marvelous game you've orchestrated I see. What's your next move?
What it always is isn't it? Throwing the game to win another.
But what if I forfeit first?

Please...Any ONE that will listen.

Take this from me. Have it and never let me peer upon it,
For I may turn to stone in my terror and live forever.
I look through words and I change what they are for
nothing is clear in this haze. You all give me fuel...
Please...strip it from me...



Ellen Hicks, *The Shadow*, oil on canvas, 2020

*This poem reminds me of my complicated relationship with religion.
I am inspired by Ashleigh's vulnerability in expressing her thoughts.*

Free Reading

They're Only Instruments

I sit still- waiting with this dissonant rage.

Crescendo , vibrating, pounding, and resonating

smoke inside the hallow chamber of the self

I presume to be.

Oh, what a bitter orchestra.

*Furious winds, abused strings, seething brass,
and fuming percussion.*

*Plucked and stroked,
they perpetuated disdain.*

*Soft air blown into the beast
who exhales a monstrous
bass of a noise.*

*All steaming inside a
nice, little frame.*

*Shapely small voices become silent
while the larger rest on the cold ground.*

Their wide openings welcome you.

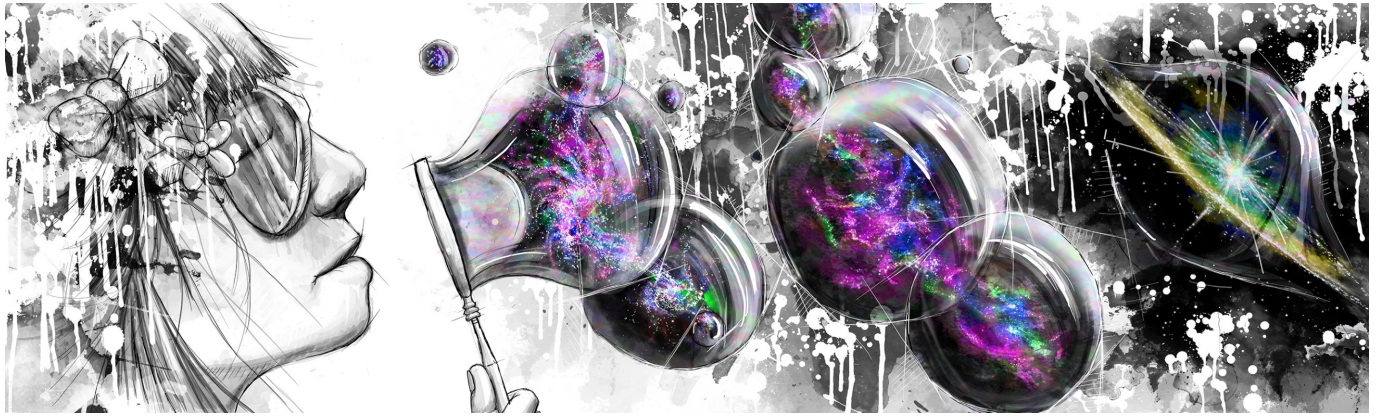
*Blow inside me, strike me,
use your fingers to make me shriek.*

You're in for a surprise.



Gia Labidi, *Fatima*, ceramic and glaze

My work is informed by the medium I am working with, and I use the process to inform my creative decisions. Through the manipulation of these materials, I create artworks that are a celebration of life and the nature of the divine feminine.



Brian Derheimer *Out of this World Imagination*, digital print on canvas, 2020

I was inspired by the imagery of breathing and creating. "Soft air blown" creates a great noise-creates, a world.

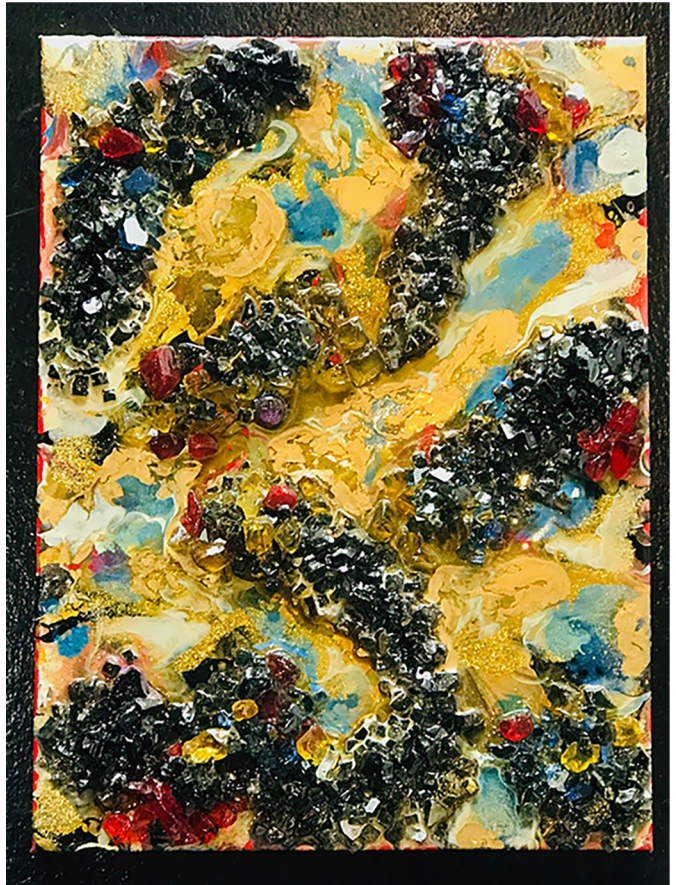
Stop Making Sense!

Feeling Glass

*Before a stroll,
with an entrapment.
Caught in the street called home.
Then a gaggle of white faces,*

*a crashed table and a piercing in
my frame.
Finally, a bed taken by a lost soul,
eyes ripped out and the blackness bleeds.
I wake up. Now it hurts.*

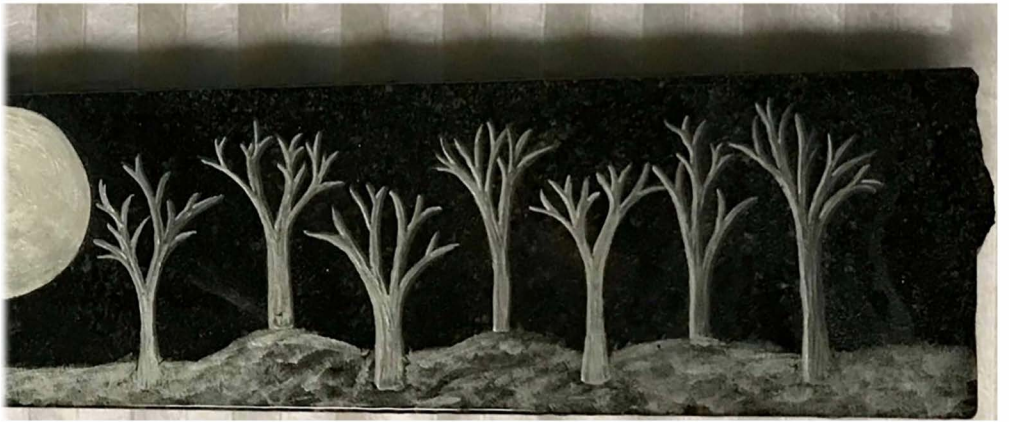
*My work is all
about imagination
which sometimes
doesn't make
sense but enhances
the beauty of it.*



Ukwensi Chappelle, *Poem*, mixed media on canvas, 2020



Geralyn Conway *Moonlit Path*, acrylic and resin on granite, 2020



I was inspired by the poem, places, and the stark beauty of a moonlit night.

Places

Bedroom(2AM)

What takes your mind away,
in that quiet moment in pure darkness.
in that quiet moment when no one is around.
What keeps it to itself?
What forces your thoughts somewhere,
in that silence the rest of the world drifts and dreams.
Breathing its steady beat, waxing and waning with life,
But you are here and lie awake.
What forces your eyes to the ceiling,
The ceiling supposed to protect you.
Protect your important “things” – your. “Stuff.”
But here, in this moment, it confines your world.
What forces your urges to cease,
your hunger is as unimportant as that buzzing fly in your room.
Your lips dry of moisture wanting that wet life bringer.
But right now, you don't care. You don't need to.
What forces your chest to feel lit aflame,
Nothing can keep you're here from combustion,
Nothing can keep your insides from imploding within.
But you lay motionless, experiencing it all unscathed.
What forces droplets of water to run down your frail face,
But when daylight comes, they dry up.
This thing now makes you smile.
Until that quiet moment in your bedroom comes.



Nicole Bear, *Starting Again*, acrylic on paper, 2020

I was inspired deeply because I have the same walk in life. Uprooting place to place with my own family. Loved the buzzing fly in the room. The sounds, feelings and texture in that state of being.



Donna Forehand *Dreams*, copper foil method stained glass with iron stand, 2020

I can truly relate to this poem as a person who struggles to sleep with the weight of the world on my mind. I feel the battle of wanting to sleep and be light and the storm of thoughts preventing that peace.

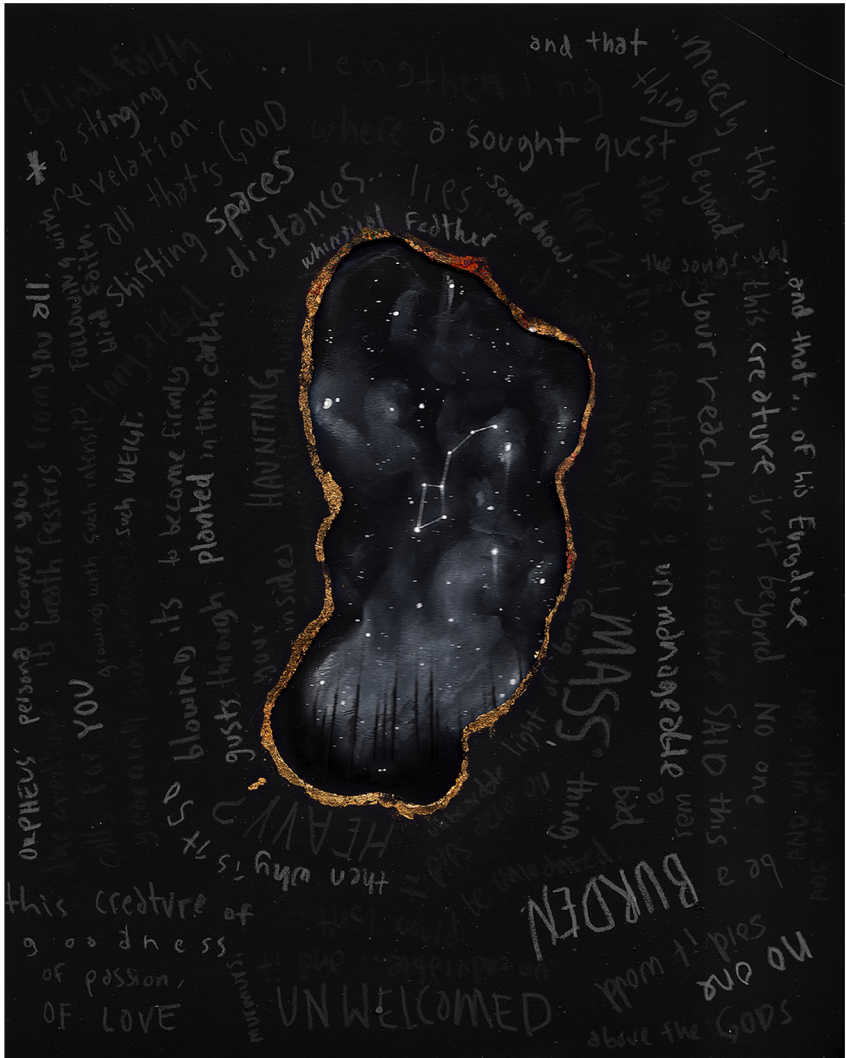
Random

*A stinging revelation of all that's good.
Shifting spaces, elongated distances*

*lengthening where a sought quest lies.
It isn't a quest just yet.
Merely this thing beyond the horizon,
This creature just beyond your reach.
A creature of fortitude and unmanageable mass.
No one said this was a bad thing.
No one said it would be a burden.
No one said it would be unwanted.*

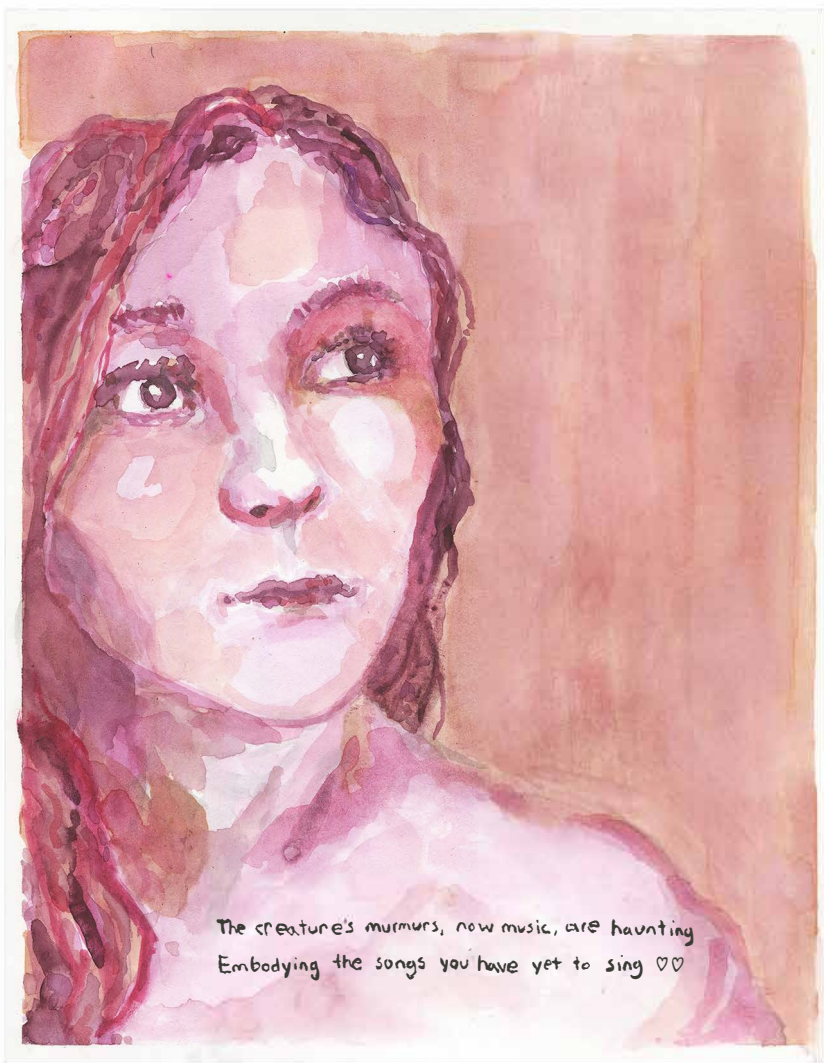
*Unwelcomed.
Unendurable...and it isn't.
Then why is it so heavy?
This creature of goodness,
Of passion. Of love.
The creature calls for you, yearning,
blowing its gusts through your insides,
Continuously flowing within.
Its breath festers from your all,
Growing with such intensity.
Such oppression. Such weight.*

*Never again to experience that...
...unbearable lightness of being.
That whimsical feather of this world's very presence.
And who you are in it.
To become firmly planted on this Earth,
But stretch above and beyond the Gods.
Somehow.
The creature's murmurs, now music, are haunting,
Embodying the songs you have yet to sing.
Following with blind faith,
Orpheus's persona becomes you,
And that...of his Eurydice*



Brian Serway, *Disinter*, watercolor on board with 24ct gold leaf, 2020

I wanted to pay tribute to the words but equally pay tribute to the emotive qualities and the way I felt reading it; as if a portal had opened up in my brain and I recollected memories just under the surface. It's been particularly fascinating to me how words can often resurface traces we once thought lost, only to come to the truth that those we hold dearest are never truly gone.



Richard Graves, *Now Music*, mixed media with watercolor on paper, 2020

A term I learned from Ashleigh was “Transgressive” meaning stories and art that touched on the most uncomfortable aspects of life. We had talked about that idea several times, that beauty can be most appreciated in the context of the darkest places. I read Ashleigh’s poem “Random” as a meditation on that duality, as well as a challenge. In those words, there seems to be a call and responsibility to not look at the beauty independently from the ugliness of the world, and without acknowledging both, you can’t truly appreciate the splendor or fleetingness of life.



Brian Derheimer *Humming-bass*, digital print on canvas, 2020

The poem, Random, includes so much imagery of music- which vibrates and makes it feel alive, like the beating wings of a hummingbird.

Witnessing

Scapegoat

Let me be naïve.

Let me make my choice.

To not raise hands in reprieve,

Or protest with my voice.

Let me demonstrate my hate,

and strain my inner pride.

Let me decay at my own rate,

and send myself to die.

Let me find what I'll live without,

and to pursue the life I chose.

Let me decide what I'm all about,

I'm far to free to lose.

Let me love who I decide to love,

but never let you too.

Let me believe that something's up above,

and let condemnation stew.

Let me vote on who to rule me,

and complain all just the same.

Let me refuse to ever stop and see,

who the real one is to blame.



Hannah Muller, *Antagonist*, acrylic on canvas, 2020

I relate to this poem on a personal level because I have thought very similar things for myself. There comes a time in everyone's life where they become tired of people telling them what to do and telling them what is right. We all need that sense of freedom and independence this poem is speaking of. Let us learn for ourselves; create our own destinies. I grew up in a very conservative community and I developed a strong yearning for personal freedom. I wanted to decide my own path instead of having others tell me what I should be doing with my life and who I should be. I chose to incorporate effects that suppressing your true self would have on your mental health. Making decisions about who we want to become and how we do it is a constant battle that we face. If we fall along the way, well then at least we are able to say that we tried.

Erotic

Nirvana

*Cradled between your thighs,
I pull you closer towards me,
already hard before the flick of my tongue,
Your warmth greets me before my fingertips.
Sweet, sweet essence cascading in and around every
Corner of my mouth.
I won't be cautious this time.
I wish to consume you in all that you are,
Taste the sensations from deep within,
spilling out in a wild twitch to my ever wandering
Hands and taste buds.
My jaw protests and I grow unrelenting,
Putting your body before my very own.
Putting a hand against my head,
shameless in using me for fulfillment and intensity,
just the way I need it.
You tense and grow still in sound,
You're moans cease and the clenching ensues.
Close to pure ecstasy,
I stop.
Heightening the experience ever more.
Until he reaches paradise.*



Jew-Lee Briere, *Wicked Courage*, graphite on paper, 2020

*I chose this piece to challenge myself to bring this piece to light.
Ashleigh always challenged people and myself to not let
the dark and fear to hold you back .*



Marina Rodriguez, *Freedom of Exploration*, mixed media with pressed flowers on canvas, 2020

I was drawn to these two poems because of the desire for freedom as well as the need for understanding expressed in both. 'Witnessing' handles this idea in a broad and personal sense; begging for the freedom to explore abstract ideas such as love, hate, truth, religion, and liberty. To me, this poem is about the need to understand our place in the universe through the understanding of self- while 'Erotic' is about the need to understand our place in the universe through the understanding of someone else. On the surface 'Erotic' is about oral sex and fulfilling desire. However, it is also more deeply about exploring someone else, understanding them, and having the grace to listen to their needs and wants. I use Victorian Flower Language to express these themes with flowers and foliage.

Death and Grief

Danse Macabre

*Round-a-bout of skeletal fractions,
Bones picked for sport.*

*A festival of frantic actions,
of the ephemeral type of sort.*

*A shot taken- gone through the ribs,
Albeit alcohol or a bullet, who knows?*

*A feeble old man comes, and they call dibs,
There massive numbers only grow.*

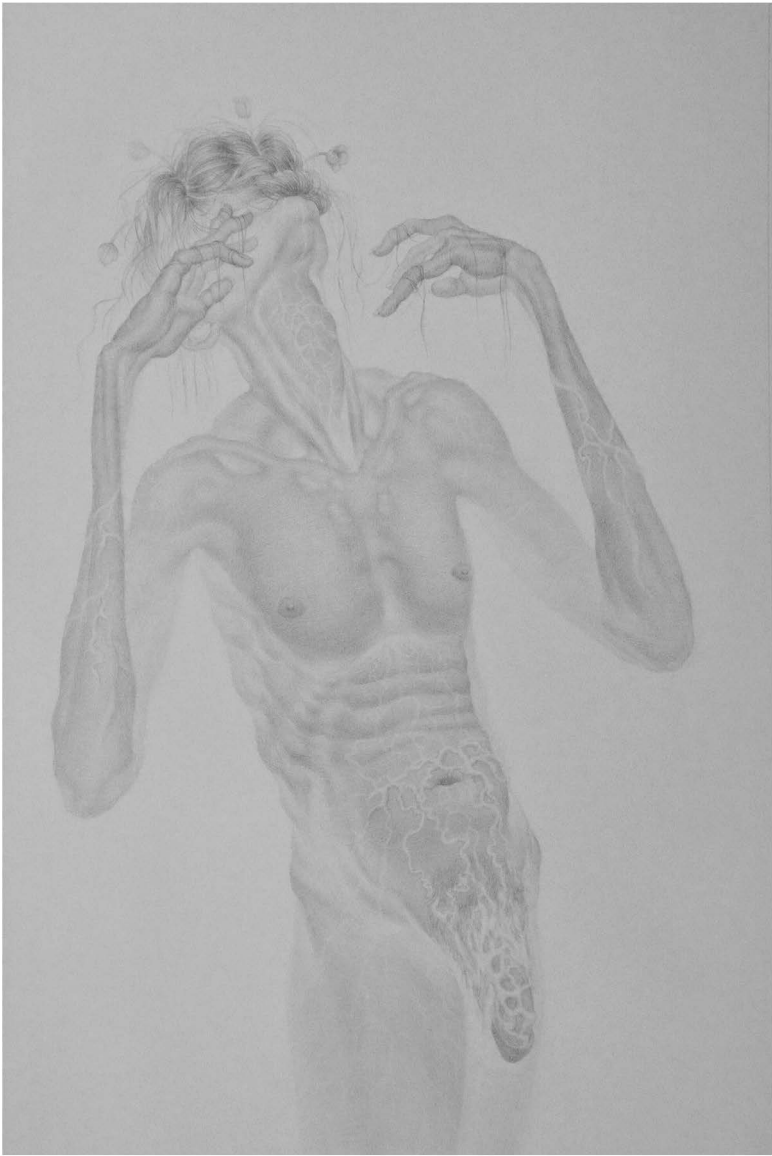
*A prayer is made where one of them rests,
The 1st prayer to him ever spoken.*

*A mist appeared inside his chest,
so he vanished now, unbroken.*

For years now, unbroken.

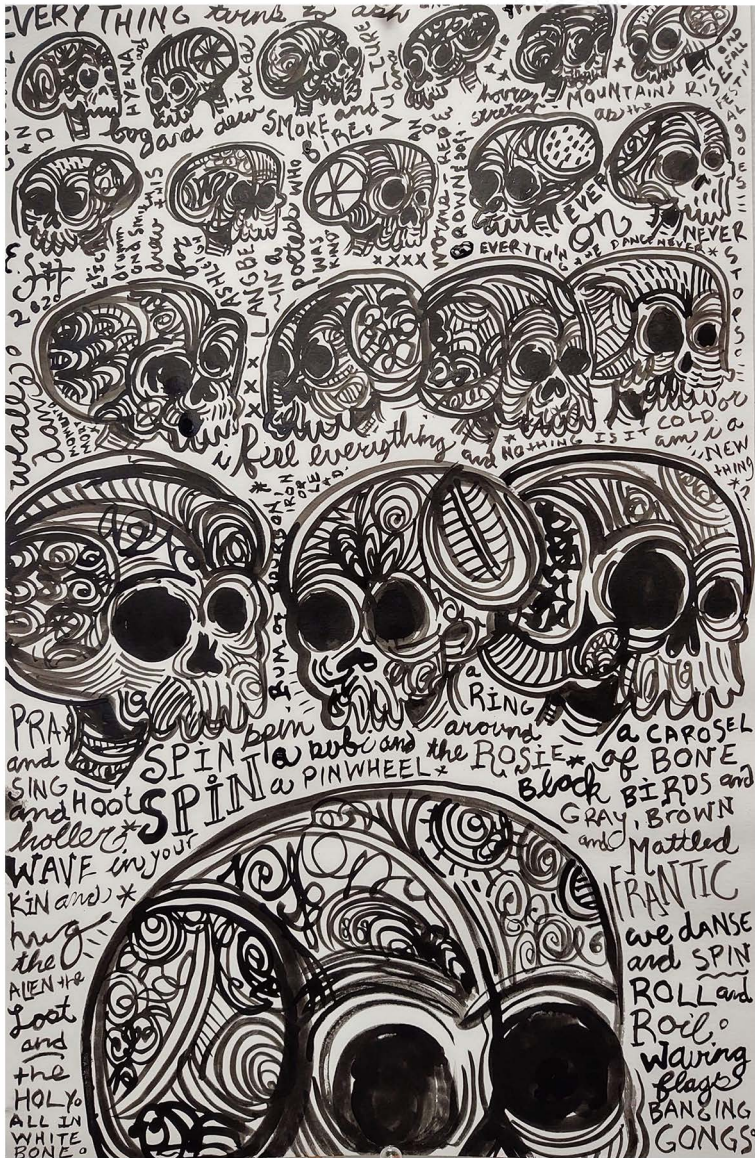
*For years now they've all been waiting,
as the people they love grow older.*

*They keep each other company-craving.
For a name whispered on a sepulcher.*



Rochele Tasca, *Zwischen den Butterblumenfeilen*, graphite on paper, 2020

The passing of my father was one of the most monumental experiences that shaped me into the artist I am today. Watching his cancer strip him of strength, awareness, and mobility has been instrumental in my understanding of what death and grief entail. The sense of anguish related so vividly in this poem of Ashleigh's is what prompted me to create this piece to touch on the complexities of loss and sorrow.



Eric Drummond Smith, *Danse Macabre*, ink on paper, 2020

It spoke to me ... The universalism. The sense that it could be ancient Greek or Edwardian or written any moment between or after or before. The feeling it gives me is reminiscent of Mexican art,- calaveras and such.



Rayn Singree, *company-craving*, ink on Mylar, 2020

Grief is a grasping feeling. It pulls, and has a gravity of its own, drawing us into its depths. This feeling is all encompassing, and if unchecked and unanswered, can grow and pull you under. It waits for the most inopportune moment, just as Ashleigh said- when we are weak, or forget. Like arms, it can be comforting or strangling- and it is always waiting for company.



Charles Vess, *My Sisters and I Would Sing*, signed digital print

*“A philosopher once asked,
'Are we human because we gaze at the stars,
or do we gaze at them because we are human?'
Pointless, really... 'Do the stars gaze back?'
Now, that's a question.”*

-Neil Gaiman, *Stardust*

Ashleigh was a voracious reader, and Neil Gaiman's stories of updated fairytales and urban fantasy were some of her favorites. *Stardust* in particular, with the imagery of a star come to physical life, captured the wonder of the skies above, and brought them to the everyday world below.

Charles Vess's work on the illustrated version of Gaiman's tale is as ethereal as the words on the page, conjuring the figures of the tale in a way that makes them both wholly real and yet as ephemeral as the stars themselves.

Ashleigh understood that the stars above were alive and a part of all of us. Through scientific understanding combined with a deep connection to the world around us, she knew that we all were stardust, literally and figuratively- and that we could shine out of our darkness as bright as any star in the sky could hope to.

Special Thanks To:

Rayn Singree—Curator and Artist

Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts

Thank you for all your love and hard work
that you have put in to ALP Art Exhibit.

You really made it shine!



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SPECIAL THANKS TO

GEORGE WHITLEY

