

Thank you everyone for being here today! There are more people here than I could have ever imagined! Your show of support is overwhelming!

Welcome to Nature's Grace, an immersive exhibition capturing God's presence in nature in the Pacific Northwest! All of the work I present today highlights awe inspiring landscapes from the region. Each piece is inspired by a different moment spent in awe of God's creation while I was exploring nature in the Pacific Northwest. Over the last year I have started intentionally feeding my fieldwork practice by making these pilgrimages a priority. My adventures took many forms including but not limited to the following:

Swimming in the Salish Sea,
kayaking with killer whales,
splashing besides seals,
paddling on the Puget Sound,
canoeing from cape to cape,
Reading books by bubbling brooks,
hammocking as the sun slipped below the horizon,
Bible studies by the beachside,
sleeping under starry skies,
camping in my car,
traveling to tiny towns,
and finding myself in the middle of nowhere driving with no specific destination in mind.

I often just choose a direction like East to the mountains or West to the coast and just drove as I let my curiosity lead the way. I made sudden turns, pulled to the side of highways and drove down many gravel roads without knowing where they led. This sometimes led to lengthy detours, dead ends and a few sketchy situations where I didn't have cell service but for the most part it led me to unique views, secluded locations and quiet trails that I got to enjoy all by myself. The further I got away from civilization, the easier it was to feel God's presence in nature. So I ran to the ocean, the forests and the mountains to put my feelings into perspective compared to the thundering roar of the waves crashing on the beach, the sun gently streaming through the trees and the beautiful views from the mountain peaks. There I could see God's handiwork everywhere I looked.

Each experience reminded me that the same God who created the mountains, the ocean and the trees created me, and created me to enjoy his creation. He looked at the world, he thought it was missing something, the world was missing Grace! Someone to appreciate and share the quiet moments of beauty found in the rural Pacific Northwest. I don't believe in coincidences, I think God has a hand in everything and God has made me a witness to the Glory of His Creation. So when I am driving, hiking or kayaking and I come upon a stunning view, I burst out into prayer thanking the Lord for making such a beautiful moment just for me. I have tried to capture these prayers and share them with you through a set of three prayer cards each person can take home. You will find these prayers are short and sweet, grounded in God's presence in natural locations. The prayers aren't perfect and neither are the prayer cards but they don't need to be. They are authentic to the way I pray and pay homage to the original way prayer

cards were produced by printing hand carved wooden blocks. It is important to remember in prayer that our intentions are what matter, we don't have to use the perfect set of words to talk to God, he just wants us to share our hearts with Him. He wants to hear our imperfect prayers and He wants to love us in our brokenness if only we give him the opportunity. That's why I approached this exhibition as an invitation to experience God's presence in nature.

I knew this exhibition had to live outside of those natural settings to reach an audience that's not already immersed in nature or God's presence in it. I have noticed I start to go stir crazy when I stay in the city for too long, I get antsy, yearning to get back in nature and immerse myself in God's creation. I have come to realize not everyone has that desire let alone acts on it, in part because not everyone has experienced the beautiful landscapes of the Pacific Northwest like I did growing up. So many people don't know what they are missing out on by staying in the city. They don't realize that what their heart is yearning for is some quality time spent in nature. I have personally observed how the city is designed for the individual and caters to every single person's unique wants and needs. While nature doesn't care. All of its ecosystems constantly rely on a community of beings growing and changing together. Nothing survives by itself, isolation only leads to decay. This is something that is easy to forget in the midst of such an urban part of Portland. Just because the city contains a lot of people in a small amount of space does not mean that it is facilitating a community between one another. And personally, as an introvert, I really value the time and space I spend away from people.

Wandering alone in the wilderness has helped me reconnect with nature and cultivate my relationship with God. When I have gone on camping trips with other people, I have found it more difficult to connect with my surroundings because not everyone engages in nature in the same ways that I do. I don't listen to music when I hike, I only have my phone in my pocket to use in case of an emergency, I carry a film camera and an audio recorder on me to capture these moments when weather permits. I also approach hiking differently than a lot of people. Although I often hike with a destination in mind, I appreciate every part of the journey that gets me there. I stop at creeks, pick up pretty rocks and wildflowers on the way to waterfalls beaches, and scenic viewpoints. I like to go slow and really take in the views every step of the way. I also approach camping differently than a lot of people. I love to camp in my hammock in more secluded locations where I can just spend my time exploring, enjoying simple food, watching the sunset, reading my bible and other books surrounded by nature. I use the equipment I already own and I have only bought the necessities like a new life jacket and a kayak rack for my car. That's right, I don't have a truck or even an SUV! I travel in my car, although hiking and kayaking are my preferred methods of transportation. Some of my favorite memories have been made as I kayaked across lakes and the vast Puget Sound. I am not discouraged by having to travel such long distances for such short stays, I find every mile is worth my while. I seek the road less traveled in search of unique, once in a lifetime experiences. I've slept in my car at restops just to be able to watch the sunset on the Pacific Ocean and the sunrise over the Cascade mountains the next morning. I even drove all the way down to California and back in just two days to immerse myself in the beauty of the Redwoods once again. I am not as afraid of the dangers of these adventures as I am of the regret of never taking

these crazy road trips. I would much rather spend all my money on gas and a camping permit than on a flight and hotel for the night.

I focus on enjoying each unique moment. I have found that the process of making a painting can actually distract me from being physically present in the sights, sounds and feelings of the moment. For a while I wasn't even using a digital recorder for my audio recordings. I liked recording on cassettes because it was a hassle to try and listen to the recording before finishing the tape. And when I take photos, I prefer to capture them on my old film camera because I can't start reviewing the photos immediately. I just record, shoot and move on to the next thing. It takes several days if not weeks to go through a roll of film and then it takes several weeks to develop before I even get the negatives back. Even though our phones are very handy to capture photos and recordings, I try to use it as little as possible because the constant stream of notifications distracts me. I mainly utilize it to take videos as I don't have any other video recording devices. I use the photos, recordings and memories I take away from my travels to revisit and reference. I go through these collections of media as I reflect on my experiences and draw on them to make new work. Sometimes this happens quickly, within a few weeks of the trip but often it takes months or even years to really appreciate these moments. All of the work I am showing today was made within the last year with the newest of the inspiration coming from my last trip in late September and the oldest inspiration coming from shortly after I turned 16. My creative practice is a way I reflect, share and appreciate the beautiful awe inspiring moments in my life. As I have deepened my understanding of my faith it has become a form of praise and thanksgiving for all that God has made.

The formal decisions I made as I developed each piece were based on what aspect of the memory I was trying to emphasize. Making these decisions has become second nature to me because of my continued interest and familiarity with so many different mediums and how they were used throughout history. I embraced the impasto style of the impressionists to show each brush stroke that together creates a beautiful painting. This is because I think of the world as one giant finger painting by God. I see his finger prints in the trees, the sand on the beach and the wildflowers found at the mountain peaks. But most importantly, I see each one of us as a carefully placed fingerprint made by God to complete this beautiful world. I experimented with the more traditional form of glass which has been used elaborately to decorate churches and capture the way light shines through windows to emphasize moments of awe. It replicates the moments when the light was shining just right to illuminate the beautiful scenery. Building on that, I used color photography to capture the vivid colors found in the landscapes of the Pacific Northwest. Sometimes, it's hard for me to believe just how vibrant the forests, the ocean and the mountains can be. I often think about what a gift from God it is to be able to fully experience the vibrant colors of gorgeous sunrises and sunsets through color vision. I worked in a variety of mediums to capture different aspects of God's presence in nature. It was important for the formal qualities and techniques of each piece to be seriously considered in addition to the importance of each landscape depicted.

When designing this immersive exhibition I was immediately drawn to this space because of the large windows with the light shining through, the large wall for the paintings, the hidden alcove

and the enclosed space. The three separate spaces give each type of media its own space and inspired me to lean into the religious symbolism of threes and create these trifolds of imagery. I really like how the room helps contain the sound recording and maintain accessibility for those who experience noise sensitivity like me. But it also makes the exhibition more intentional, you can't wander into it by accident, it makes it a conscious choice to engage with the work. The alcove is the perfect secluded place for the speakers to sit while still being able to fill the room. The sound draws people in and invites them to individually and intimately engage with the photography. Sitting upon a simple cedar shelf, the viewmasters invite viewers to look at the landscapes like they are looking through binoculars. As people look through all the photos, this helps open their eyes to what's around them, notice and engage in a deeper dialogue between themselves and the rest of the work. As they turn to glass pieces, I hope they can recognize the religious ties and appreciate the emphasis on the way the light shines through the pieces. I hope the audience can see the combination of both captured in the paintings and understand that none of it was made accidentally, it was all crafted carefully by hand. As people leave, I hope people will pick up at least one of the prayer cards by the entrance to connect with the creator. It would be a failure of this exhibition if the audience can't ascertain the religious themes that are at the core of my practice. That's why the prayer cards are takeaways instead of something like business cards. I don't want to refer you back to more of my work, I am trying to refer you back to the creator. The only reason I signed my name on each card is so you can find more of my stuff later on. Plus my given name is the perfect name for an artist devoting their life to capturing the gift of God's creation especially in pine covered Pacific Northwest!

Grace Angeline Feucht, refers to a gift from God and means to honor, angel and conifer trees. I received this name at my baptism at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, before the church had moved to a cathedral style church in East Vancouver. My parents moved us from the Camas countryside to the suburban neighborhood just blocks from the church before my First Holy Communion. I fell in love with the huge windows looking out on a line of trees with the foothills of the cascade mountains in the distance. As a kid it was very difficult to pay attention during mass but I loved watching the way the trees waved in the wind and the rain collected as it ran off the roof. As I grew older these views were able to help ground me as I listened to my pastors homilies. They helped me connect God's love for us found in scripture to our immediate surroundings in nature. I grew up camping and hiking with my parents, especially my dad. Starting around age 10 they sent me and my sister to Camp Don Bosco for a week each summer. There, in awe of God's creation, I first felt God's presence in nature.

With that I want to pray and thank God for everything and acknowledge everyone that has made this exhibition happen today. Thank you to my parents for giving me the perfect name. Thank you to my mom for introducing me to and teaching me about art from such a young age. Thank you to my dad for the financial support to make all of these works. Thank you to my family and friends which I've shared so many hiking and camping adventures with. Thank you to my dad, uncle Jason, Aunt Mary and Cousin James for helping me buy and maintain the car I've had since I was 16. Thanks for my car and my kayaks for getting me to all the places and carrying my stuff along the way! Thank you dad and megita for the kayaks! Thanks for all of the support I've had at PNCA! Thanks for all of the techniques I have learned and implemented along the

way! Thanks for the opportunity to leave the Pacific Northwest and study from a new perspective at York St John's! Thanks for all the friends I made in England when I began to discover my personal art philosophy! Thanks for the traditional education I received between trips to England's world renown galleries! Thanks for the new found sense of appreciation for the beautiful landscapes of the Pacific Northwest. Thank you for the funds to study abroad in England made possible by the Art of Sparkling Internship stipend and scholarships. Thank you for the opportunity to design an Oregon inspired wine label for the local Argyle winery! Thank you to Cathy Martin, Kristin Brown Rogers, Lynn Brown and all the people who supported me as I pursued that opportunity. Thank you to the thesis department, my mentor and advisor KP Bradshaw, my thesis cohort especially my classmates Jacob, Tania and Maizy for your continued support. Thank you for the teachers, classmates and family that have challenged me to further understand the philosophies driving my practice! Thank you to my pastors Father Mitchell and Father Nathe, Father Ron Belisle, Father Justin Ryan, my camp counselor Father Ben Bray, my role models in the faith, Grandma Shirley, Uncle Jason, and all of my friends from church that have guided my spiritual discernment along the way! Thank you to all my coworkers, friends and campers from Camp Don Bosco for the fun we had together in God's name! Thank you again to my parents for sending me to Catholic Youth Organized summer camps where I was able to first experience God's presence! Thank you God for your continued presence in my life ❤️