

Thank you so much for coming to my presentation today! My name is Jordan Flowers, and I'm so excited to show what I've been working on for the past semester. A lot of blood, sweat, and real life tears went into this, so I hope you like it as much as I do. With these paintings I wanted to depict my life here in Portland and how I've been experiencing it since arriving at PNCA, how I've felt living here and how I've changed overall as a person in the past couple years.

My thesis consists of 3 22x28 acrylic paintings, All with red yarn sewn into them. Each painting has its own visual story and meaning, with an accompanying hand sewn doilies with red thread. The paintings over the semester took around 30 hours to complete and the doilies took 6 hours to complete. That's Not including the multiple hours of ideation, sketching, planning and material gathering. Through this process I chose not to name these paintings to represent how I am still figuring out my identity myself and who I am as a person. For the sake of this presentation, I will refer to them as paintings 1, 2, and 3.

for my thesis I wanted to create something that was different from what I've made in past years, which included a lot of digital work. Not that I don't like digital work nor plan to stop really working in it but I wanted these pieces to convey my experiences and emotions while living in Portland for the past two years, which I feel are better represented in a physical medium compared to digital. Some predominant emotions throughout the paintings are isolation, growth, and connection. I am also very interested in book illustrations, and though there are a lot of digital illustration you could produce for a book I really wanted to focus on the quality and texture aspect that a picture book or graphic novel would give

With painting 1, I depicted an outline of a figure outside the building across from my old apartment building. Living in that apartment was a very negative time in my life due to the environment created. I chose to outline the figure, who represents me, as opposed to filling the figure in because I didn't really feel like a full person at that time in my life. In the other two paintings, the red strings connect to the focal point of the paintings in a way. In this one, they are high above the figure, representing how I felt alone in this time of my life. At the same time, the outlined figure isn't even necessarily the focal point of the painting, which further conveys those feelings.

With painting 2, I didn't develop this piece so much as it came to me. I've always felt drawn to hummingbirds and use them as a motif in much of my art. In this painting, I see myself as the hummingbird, rather than the hands holding it. I think the bird being caught in a string represents how I often feel trapped within myself and confused about where I fit in here in Portland, both as a Black person and as a queer person. I see very little representation of people like me here in Portland as it is a predominantly white city and though there have been changes to make it more inclusive I still feel it lacks both diversity and representation. And that is something I want to include more in my works in the future.

With painting 3, I wanted to put forth feelings of putting down roots in a place that wasn't where I grew up. Moving to Portland has been my first time living away from my family, which allowed me to discover more about myself and grow more as a person. However, the red rose is not fully bloomed. This represents how I am still growing and learning to this day. The figure in the ground has roots outstretched in all directions, which represents my ties to the friends I have made here. But still the figure is depicted alone it implies isolation, something that I still struggle with a little today, and a common theme throughout these pieces.

For the three doilies, I've had them in all of my living situations. And are all very sentimental to me in that way. Wine from parties, coffee mug rings, and my friends sweat and personality. All stained onto these pieces of cloth. Hopefully now to be hung on a wall and adorned upon. the words and phrases sewn on each of them correspond to the paintings I made. "Introspection" corresponds with painting 1, "smell the roses" with painting 3, and "stars in the motherhand" with painting 2. I wanted a secondary object that tied in the red string elements.

I originally tried to use a sewing machine, but instead went for a more hands on approach. Not because of anything bad happening like my doily ripping completely in half, but because I think it ties my project together better

## Process

I first started off with the ideation phase, really figuring out where I was going with this. Lots of cool but failed vision. The time my roommates and I's apartment got infested with ladybugs, or my head turning into some weird tropical plant. At this point I didn't really know what I was making.

I just knew that I needed to have a good time making it or I knew I would just have a horrible semester. So I chose things that I love. Hummingbirds, powerlines, flowers. My top 3.

. From there I went into sketching out and figuring out colors for each one. Really experimenting again with the confusion of colors and how it is associated with identity.

.Regarding some of the creative choices I made, I used a specific color scheme in all of these paintings. Yellows and ochre, pink, and a cool green, as well as red in the strings. I wanted to use bright colors as opposed to more muted colors because I find myself seeing things a lot brighter than I used to. When I lived in California, it was like the saturation had been turned down. I felt so confused about who I was and where I was going. I still feel that confusion, but now the saturation of my life has been turned up. Everything feels more vibrant. In painting 3 especially, I think the bright yellow background represents the euphoria and opportunity that I feel is here in Portland.

.I also wanted to use colors that don't necessarily go together. Pink sky, green sky, yellow sidewalk. I wanted the colors to not be what you would usually see in nature. A sense of confusion. The feeling of not fitting in Throughout all of these processes There were some specific recommendations given to me by peers and mentors whose advice I took. . Resulting in a better image each and every day, like adding a gradient to the ground on painting 1 or giving the hummingbird a red puffy chest on painting 2.

I also used red yarn for the paintings and red thread in the doilies. In Chinese folklore, red string represents a fated connection to others. I feel this way about several of my friends and family thus I represented it here. They are a huge part of my experience both in Portland and at PNCA.

. As for the doilies, the process was a lot more approachable and was a fun thing to do when I found myself looking at my paintings too long. I would put the doily onto my computer screen and trace over the text inverted with a dry erase marker. The text itself is heavily inspired from pivotal moments here in Portland and the things that I hear when looking at my paintings.

The process of coming up with this project was an extensive one and I felt a lot of pressure around it. I originally wanted to use other forms of media including a puzzle and three 36x48 paintings which is insane to think about now,, as well as a sketchbook depicting my creative process in different mediums. I wanted to create the puzzle as it represented growth and figuring out who I am, and I also wanted to make some kind of interactive aspect to this project.

I also intended to reference a specific memory with my friends in the project, but it didn't make the final cut as my theme for the paintings shifted in more of my identity than it did their perception of me and how I see them.

I ended up shifting away from this and towards what my thesis project is now largely due to, artist's block which made it very hard for me to feel motivated to complete my thesis project already. I have been in art school for so long that sometimes I feel like I've lost the love I once had for art due to the pressure to constantly create. Making art about things that feel personal to me is especially draining and has taken a lot out of me. Over the past year and a half I have lost a lot of the will to create art for myself rather than for other people, and one of my goals with my thesis project was to make something that felt like it was for myself, not just for other people and I succeeded at that. I think after I graduate, it will be a tenuous process to rekindle my love of creating, but I look forward to it.

Nonetheless, I would still like to fulfill my long term dream of becoming a children's book illustrator. I want more representation in art for people who feel like me, who feel like they don't belong. I want to address the isolation and other emotions related to identity, specifically to race and sexuality. My race and sexuality are both big parts of who I am and shape the way I view the world. They are also both social issues getting a lot of attention in the US right now, especially with recent political developments, but they didn't just start recently. They have affected me my whole life. It feels especially important to me to make art now more than ever

because I live in Oregon, which despite having a thriving queer population is still a very white state.

I took creative inspiration from several artists as well as a musical artist I like. One of the artists is Amy Dury, a British artist who primarily paints figures and familial scenes. I love the way she uses bright colors and how she depicts characters in her work. I love the way some of her pictures look almost unfinished, like more of an idealization of a person rather than a real person. I feel like this inspiration can be seen in painting 1, especially in the outlined figure, and in the shading of the building, as well as in the shading of the hummingbird on painting 3.

Another artist I took inspiration from is Oda Iselin, who is from Norway. She makes surrealist, almost fairy-tale-like art which I really admire the style of and would like to emanate in future illustration. Her art depicts a lot of queer relationships and themes which I resonate with as well.

I was also inspired by a band called Beach House. I really resonate with their music and associate it strongly with living in Portland and the experiences I've had here. I listened to it a lot while making the project and I think it really aided on the look and feel of both the doilies and the paintings.

In general, I would consider my work to be multi-media. As an illustration major, I find myself doing a lot of work in the digital realm though I often add physical elements to it. This time, I wanted to create an entirely physical project that took up space in the world, not just in a digital realm. I designed these paintings with the intent to be displayed in galleries. As I mentioned, my long term goal is to be a children's book illustrator, with a more traditional style, which is also part of why I chose to use a traditional medium for my thesis. I intend to reference this project, style, and whimsical color scheme in future projects as well.

I would like to thank you all for attending my presentation. Thank you for everyone's support throughout my thesis project and my years here at PNCA. Thank You to my friends for keeping my spirits lifted throughout this, and thank you to Colette for being a great inspiration and an amazing mentor. I hope you enjoyed this presentation and these pieces as much as I enjoyed making them.