

My body of work consists of many artworks that all relate to one theme, which is identity. There are a few ways that I convey the theme of identity in my body of art. The first way is by including myself in the physical art, both in full form and in silhouette. I also portray nature because it helps to connect me to happy memories and activities with my family. Lastly, I use symbolism as a way to express my identity. Each piece in my body of work has a story behind it that brings me back to important times in my life. Art has always been a way for me to express myself, so I need to include the story behind each one of my artworks. The theme of identity is a very relatable topic. Oftentimes, people try to learn more about themselves and that is why I chose these specific pieces. I created these works to understand better how my past has shaped who I am as a person. My goal is for the viewer to get a better understanding of who I am and my story based on each work and the entire body of work as one.

Each art piece in my body of work has been heavily influenced by past life experiences, whether negative or positive. As well as this, each piece has been inspired by other artists and their respective art movements. I try to find inspiration for my pieces from other artists who excel with the medium and either have very similar visual appearances or conceptual meanings. For example, my block print, *A Permanent Home*, was inspired by Thomas Berger Johnson. He lived through the expressionism and art nouveau movements, influencing the style of his block prints. I was inspired by Johnson because he excelled with printing and his works included visual aspects that were similar to what was to be included in mine. Two of my pieces, *A Summer Gaze* and *My Culture*, were both inspired by Frida Kahlo but for different reasons. *A Summer Gaze* was inspired by the visual aspects that come with Kahlo's connection to the surrealist movement while *My Culture* was inspired by the cultural context she includes in her works. While there is always an artist connected to the inspiration of my pieces, I have my own personal inspiration, whether it be internal struggles, family memories, or unimaginable family losses. *Forever With Me*, is a digital collage that focuses on the loss of three family members in five years. The collage represents their memories of being with me always. Some of my other works explore my self-consciousness and developing confidence, along with the emotions one may face.

How my art is being displayed in the exhibition photos is significant to the overall theme of identity. The first three art pieces in this collection are Emotions of One, Forever With Me, and A Summer Gaze. All three of these art pieces fall under the category of self-inclusion. The first piece, Emotions of One, inspired by Andy Warhol, explores four emotions that one may face on any given day. Then under my digital collage, Forever With Me, the colored pencil illustration A Summer Gaze can be seen. This is a depiction of myself at a time when I felt most confident. The next three artworks, My Happy Place, My City, and The Four Seasons, all depict familiar scenery from my hometown that embarks on memories that I have with my family. Memories like these relate to identity because they shape who I have become. The last section in my collection is the symbolic pieces. The first piece, My Culture, is a collage painting that has symbolism relating to my Puerto Rican heritage. Lastly, A Permanent Home, Outdoor Classroom, Memories Remembered, and Light to Dark, all have symbolic elements familiar to me and my past. This familiarity is not only important to me but some little details are also familiar to my family. My exhibition is arranged in a way that progressively displays how my perception of identity has changed over the past two years. Experiences and inspirations over this period have helped to greatly develop my body of work.