

What We

Are

Made Of

Aspen Art Museum Young Curators
April 18–May 3, 2020

Since 2005, the Aspen Art Museum has gathered a group of young curators for an annual program that engages high school students from across the Roaring Fork Valley as well as New Castle and Rifle, culminating in a group exhibition. Over a period of six months, these students work closely with the museum's education and curatorial staff to build aesthetic valuation, leadership, organizational, and critical-thinking skills. The Young Curators produce an ambitious exhibition that serves to identify the next generation of artistic voices within our community.

What We

Are

Made Of

The 2020 Young Curators present an exhibition of works exploring personal themes of perseverance and growth through a variety of materials and techniques. *What We Are Made Of* invites audiences to consider their own vulnerability and strength, and to reflect on the questions: where have we come from, what have we overcome, and what has helped us grow?

2020 Young Curators

Aspen High School

Eryn Brettmann

Coal Ridge High School

Kiona Carrasco

Logan Cox

Glenwood Springs High School

Sebastian Arreola

Annika Bucchin

Jenna Golden

Rifle High School

Lily McCann-Klausz

Here are some ways we've learned to engage with contemporary art. We invite you to participate and find your own meaning—there is no wrong way to interpret an artwork, only your way!

Take a moment to look carefully at the exhibition. Then, choose a piece that catches your attention and respond to one or more of the prompts below.

- | Does the artwork remind you of anyone/anything? Simply notice your associations.
- | Respond to what you see, think, and feel through writing (this could be a short story, a sparked memory, or a poem).
- | Consider the artist's choices and the materials they have used. What might this tell us about the artist?
- | Can you guess the artist's intention?
- | Now that you have spent some time examining the work, what is something new you wouldn't have noticed if you had just glanced at it?

This year, the Young Curators were presented with an unexpected challenge: produce an online exhibition during the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic and a statewide shelter-in-place order. The following responses are the Young Curators' reflections on their processes, which illuminate what they themselves "are made of" through producing and opening an online group museum exhibition under unusual, often challenging circumstances.

What does being a curator mean to you?

A curator is a storyteller—someone willing to portray a message, whether it is their own or someone else's. —Jenna Golden

Curating means placing art in the world in a light that allows it to shine. Curation gives visual art a chance to mean something to the public. —Eryn Brettmann

Curating is another step in the journey of an artwork. It allows the work to be seen and received by the audience in a way that is meaningful. —Logan Cox

Being a curator is having the ability to tell two stories at the same time: your own, as a curator, and also the story of the artist and what they want to say. To have the ability to do this is very special and something that people often take for granted. —Annika Bucchin

A curator is a different type of artist. They set up an exhibition that has an impact on the audience and create meaningful connections between artists and viewers. They can manipulate the show to be direct and impactful or subtle and thought-provoking. Though the curator is invisible, they shape the way the audience interprets the artwork.

—Lily McCann-Klausz

Describe how current events have affected your experience as a Young Curator. Has the theme of your exhibition taken on new meanings?

The whole world is going through a major crisis due to COVID-19, but in a year, it will be something that we have all overcome. As a curator, I have had to learn to put together a show that will not actually be displayed at a museum, and have had to do most of the work without ever seeing my fellow curators in person. Though I initially viewed this as a major obstacle, it has definitely helped me grow and will continue to do so throughout the rest of the process. So far, I have learned to communicate online to figure out how to host a "virtual opening"—something that I'd never even heard of before! Like our theme states, our own challenges and growth are inherently related, and it is by overcoming those challenges that we discover what we are made of. —Lily McCann-Klausz

Since things have changed, I believe this exhibition will bring everyone together even more now. We can all grow in this hard time—and we are all facing hard times at the moment as our schedules and lives have changed tremendously. As a curator, this has shifted how our show has turned out, but we still made it work so everyone can feel a part of the community. I am very excited for everyone to bond over the art—and hopefully meet everyone. Personally, this show keeps reminding me that we are all in this together and are not alone. We can all grow together. —Jenna Golden

Having a couple of pieces within the show reflecting societal challenges that we all encounter without realizing it is a great connection to the time that we're living in right now. The novel spread of COVID-19 has challenged us to practice social distancing, only go out for essential purposes, wash our hands continuously, stay six feet apart, etc. These factors are shaping our society temporarily but with long-term effects—and the bizarre thing is that we are dealing with it as time counts the seconds passing by. It has allowed us to reflect on our humanity, behavior, and dominance over Mother Nature—realizing that a minuscule virus can shut down our surroundings within days. This operates as a metaphor that, despite a challenge being big or small, we're still human beings and are

all affected at the moment. We respond in certain ways, but that doesn't mean we're not getting through it. These are the events that will become part of history and showcase the growth of our humanity and how challenges are temporary, but the learning we obtain from them is infinite. —Sebastian Arreola

With each hardship we face, we become stronger, and that experience helps us knock down future challenges. This theme is essential in today's larger society, specifically because we all are impacted by COVID-19. This exhibition is a helpful reminder that we have gone through troubled times in the past and different kinds of obstacles, but they still had an impact in some way, shape, or form. Our ancestors all lived through troubled times and shared their experiences with future generations. This exhibition is a reminder that we can get through this pandemic with flying colors and will always keep our heads up and look forward to the future. —Kiona Carrasco

As a part of growing up, we begin to realize the things that have contributed to our personalities. As I get closer to adulthood, I realize my strengths and weaknesses more, as well as what causes them. —Logan Cox

This show is highly connected to our lives today. These pieces have a lot to do with challenges

in our day-to-day lives, and right now, we, as a planet, are going through challenges that none of us were prepared for. The pieces speak volumes about the proper ways to handle adversity and how it is true that you never know who a person really is until you see them in times of trouble. Everyone can learn from the lessons these artists are teaching us. They have a lot to say on this matter and, bizarrely, having a show during this global pandemic is a perfect time to express to our community how teens are handling issues today and that it has a thing or two to learn from us.

—Annika Bucchin

Hope for the future:

As people consider the questions presented in our exhibition, we hope that they will think of themselves, as well as others. For example, when we ask “what have you overcome?,” they might think of something personal or that relates to more people or society as a whole. *What We Are Made Of* also relates to society by thinking of larger issues that communities have overcome and the community history that we have in common.

—Lily McCann-Klausz

We, as a curatorial team, have had to go through a lot this year. We thought the show would be canceled, just like everything else right now, but because we chose not to cancel, it connects to this theme of showing what we are made of. Putting on this

show expresses not only our ability to handle difficult times but also how we are done letting this pandemic take another thing from this valley. In a way, it is like an act of defiance against the very thing that has stripped so much from me, and by giving something back to the community, it makes this show ten times more important.

—Annika Bucchin

What We

Are

Made Of

2020 Artists



Letey Crownhart
Roaring Fork High School
Rebirth, 2020
Charcoal, ink, acrylic paint
40 x 32 in (101.6 x 81.28 cm)

I love showing that there is beauty in imperfection, strength, and especially in nature. Part of being content in life is finding elegance in every part of it, even the “ugly” parts.



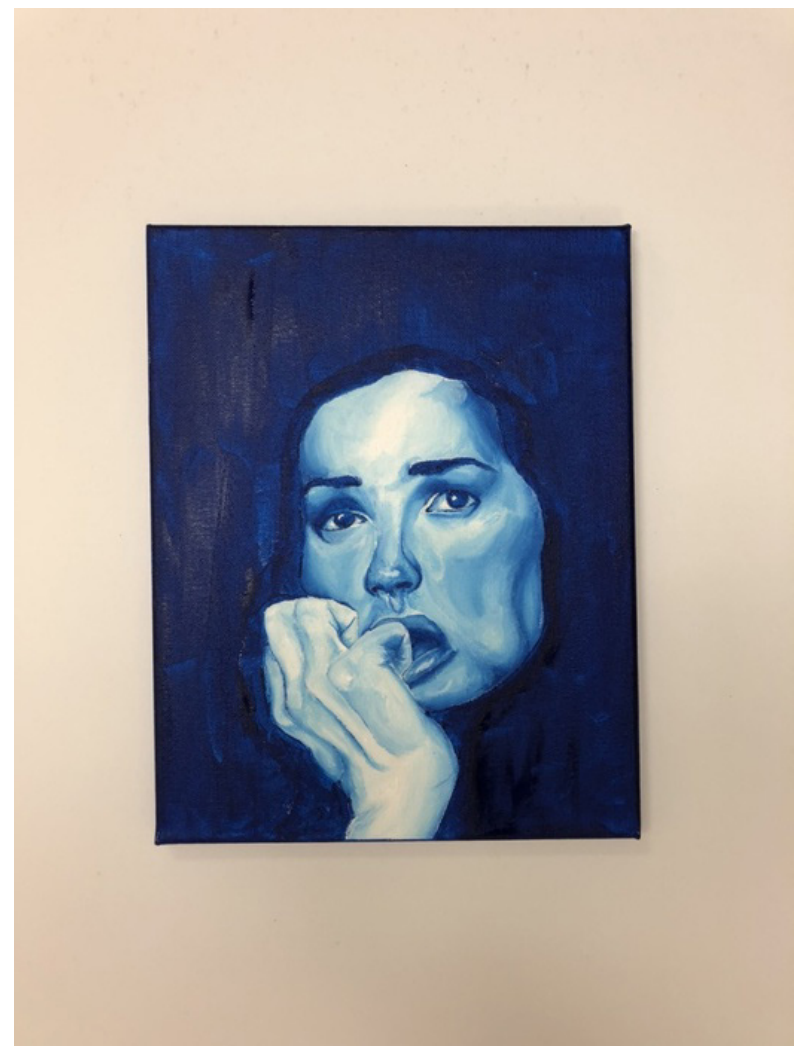
Celia Anne Scruton
Glenwood Springs High School
Rewired, 2020
Mixed media
18 x 30 x 5 in (45.72 x 76.2 x 12.7 cm)

Technology has become an essential asset of young people's identity. I created this piece to represent how our connections to the real world have shifted significantly through the growth of technology within society.



Anahi Gutierrez Martinez
Rifle High School
Vida, 2020
Cross-stitching, acrylic, and
wood
29 x 11 x 11 in (73.66 x 27.94 x
27.94 cm)

I am the daughter of immigrant parents that have supported me throughout my life—combining American culture with their native culture, being Mexicans. Through this artwork, I want to show the beauty of my origins. Each image hanging from the chime symbolizes something within me that I am proud to acknowledge as part of my heritage.



Jocelyn Abbott
Rifle High School
Thinking of Blue, 2020
Acrylic on canvas
14 x 9 x 1/2 in (35.56 x 22.86 x
1.27 cm)

This piece tells my story of going through depression and the feeling of drowning in nothing. Using a monochromatic palette symbolizes this feeling.



Renee Bruell
Roaring Fork High School
Kieran, 2019
Graphite and map of the San Juan
Mountains
11 x 8 1/2 in (27.94 x 21.59 cm)

Art has really been one of the best parts of high school. This year has been made up of trying to see the beauty of the world in different ways than usual and also finding ways that other people see beauty. I have been challenged this year to use art to answer the question of how society measures our value. I am really interested in the way that we all find worth in different things, and how we find worth in ourselves.



Melanie G. Rodriguez
Rifle High School
Broken Reflection, 2020
Mixed media
7 x 5 x 1 in (17.78 x 12.7 x 2.54 cm)

My final piece is a reflection of how I wasn't allowing myself to be happy. I wouldn't accept myself and would criticize my appearance. Comparing myself to other people became regular and lacked self-love. My piece serves as a personal reminder that sometimes what you see in the mirror isn't always you.



Frenna White
Glenwood Springs High School
Garbage, 2020
Acrylic, Mod Podge, newspaper on board
18 x 24 in (45.72 x 60.96 cm)

Society crams the value of childhood innocence, imagination, and the necessity of its preservation down our throats, yet ensures that it does not survive in today's social climate—inadvertently killing aptitude toward creativity.



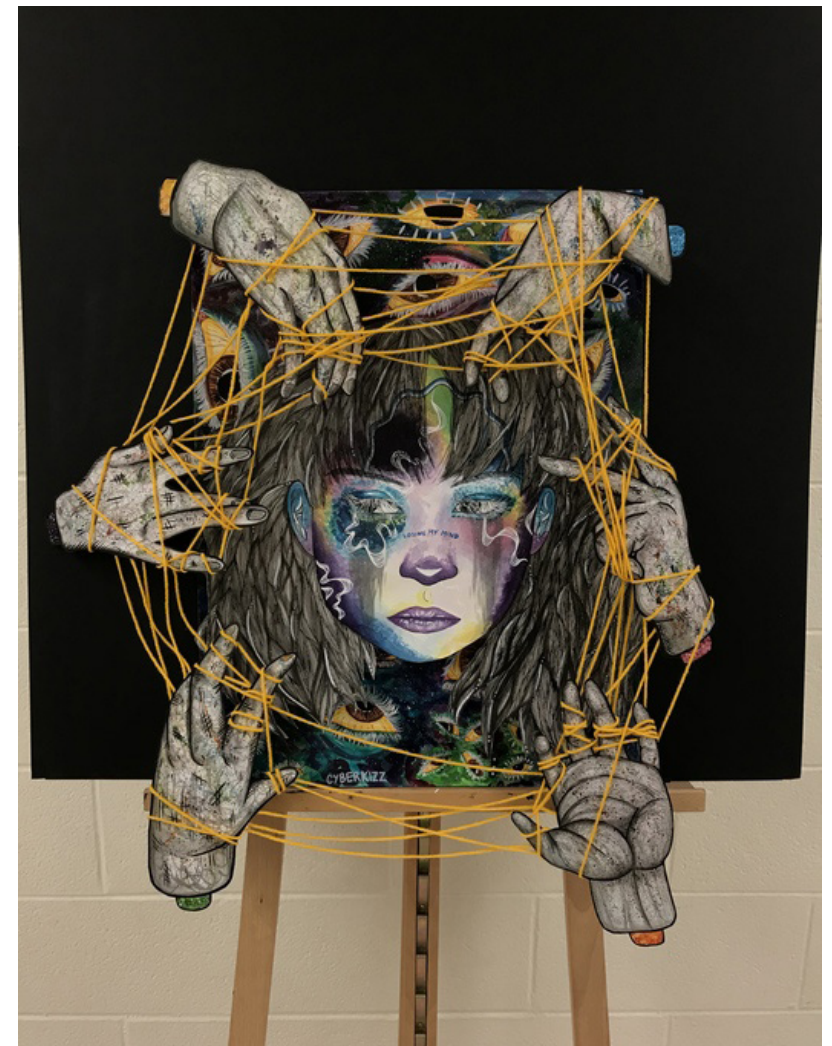
Amanda McGill
Glenwood Springs High School
In Memory, 2019
Pen and ink
12 x 18 in (30.48 x 45.72 cm)

My piece is dedicated to my deceased grandparents, as, in my family, yellow swallowtail butterflies represent them. This piece also includes a third butterfly, which represents me. The two yellow butterflies are watching over me, just as my grandparents are now. The background, behind the drawing, is a text from my late grandfather's favorite book, *The Greatest Generation*.



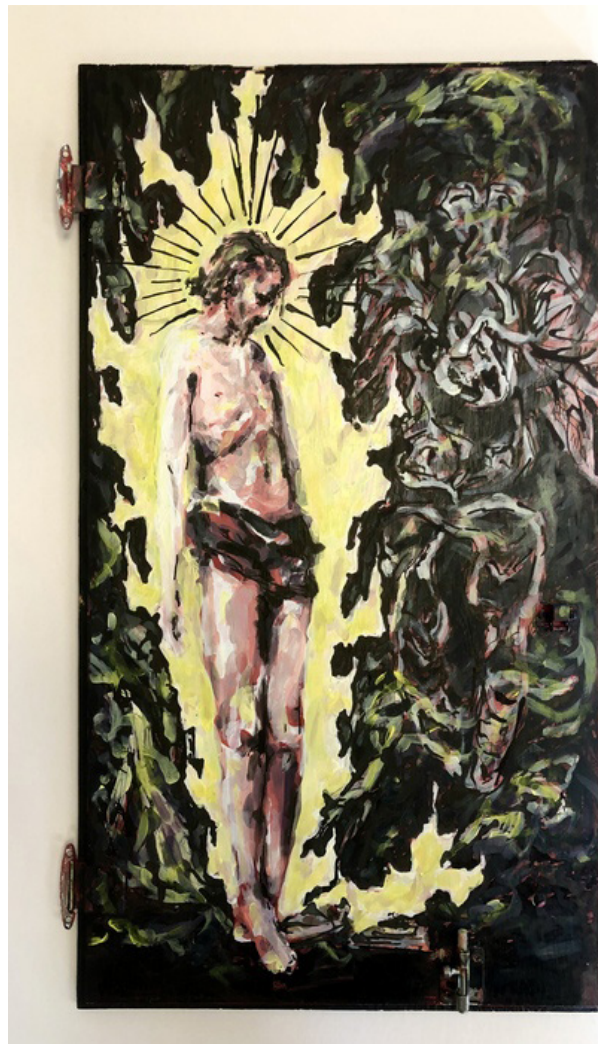
Iris Santana
Rifle High School
Change, 2020
Graphite, pen, colored pencil,
acrylic paint
18 x 12 x 12 in (45.72 x 30.48 x
30.48 cm)

There's been a lot going on in my life that I need to overcome. I, and many others, need to let go of all the bad things of the past. We need to change ourselves for the better. Lots of people go through the same things, and I hope for people to see this same message. I tried to make this piece colorful, but not too much, because not everything in life is 100 percent good, and that's okay.



Aline Trevizo
Rifle High School
Losing My Mind, 2020
India ink, acrylic, micron pens,
yarn, wooden sticks
29 x 27 x 4 in (73.66 x 68.58 x
10.16 cm)

My piece is about my depression and my feelings. The yellow yarn represents my life and how it's all messy and tangled up, but when you untangle all the knots, my life is suddenly perfect. In the end, it's never going to be a straight, organized line because life does not work like that.



Sarah Teague
Colorado Rocky Mountain School
Immolation, 2019
Ink and acrylic paint on wooden
cabinet door
31 x 17 x 3/4 in (78.74 x 43.18 x
1.9 cm)

This piece depicts the execution of fourteenth-century theologian and physician Michael Servetus. Servetus made many contributions to the world of medicine and was the first European to describe pulmonary circulation. He was burnt at the stake for heresy in Calvinist Geneva alongside his manuscripts.



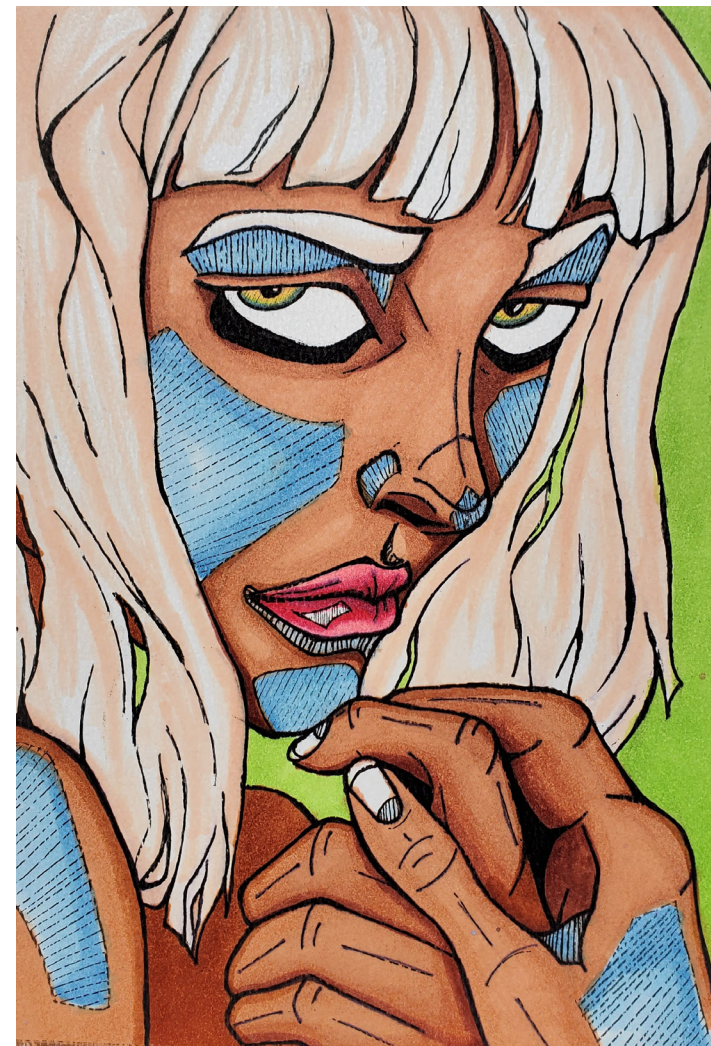
Cerise Cox
Coal Ridge High School
Equanimity, 2020
Acrylic paint and botanical
materials
12 x 17 in (30.48 x 43.18 cm)

My artwork reflects my passions. *Equanimity* was created to materialize the feeling of mental calmness and composure in difficult situations. *Equanimity* is a feeling I strive for.



Andrea Delgado
Rifle High School
Emptiness Brings Beauty, 2020
Watercolor, india ink, acrylic
paint, flowers, guitar strings
32 1/2 x 21 1/2 x 1 in (82.55 x
54.61 x 2.54 cm)

This painting has gone through a lot of my emotions—being sad and feeling empty. I want to express that you can get out of that state by either speaking about your troubles or by not giving up and being positive. One should embrace feeling empty because it brings the best out of people.



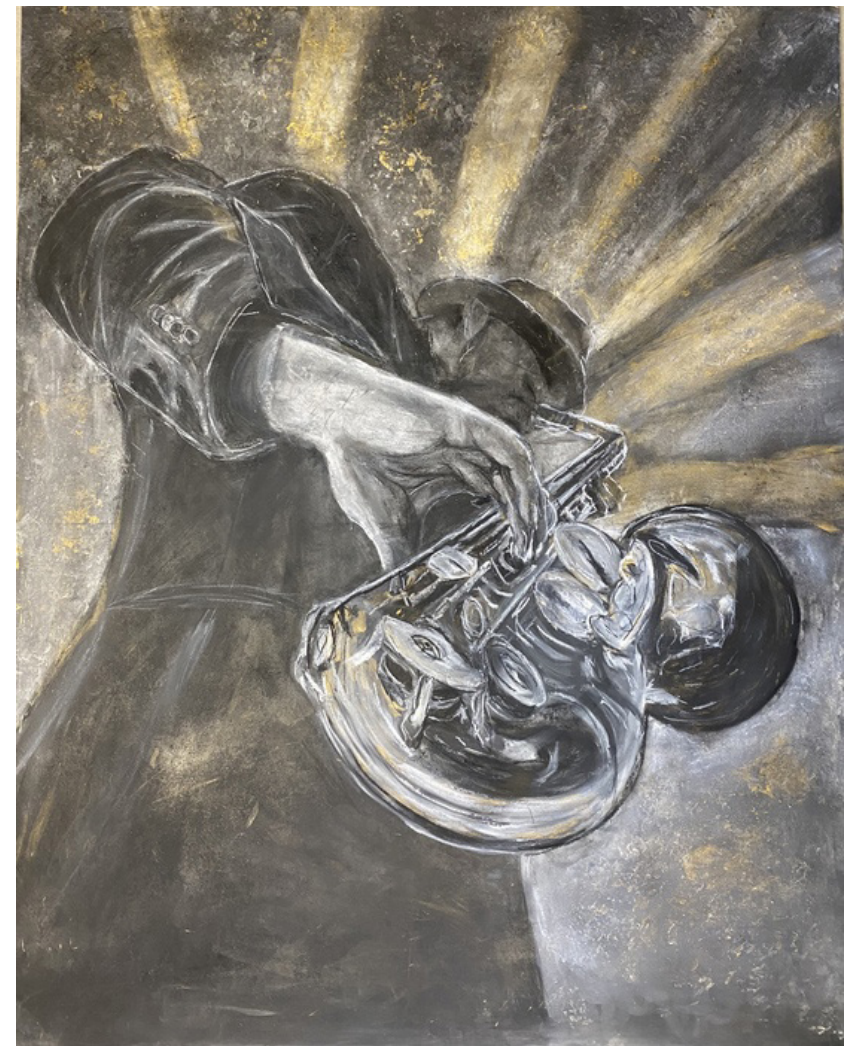
Avery Hughes
Glenwood Springs High School
Anxiety Behind a Mask, 2020
Color pencil drawing
9 3/4 x 6 3/4 in (24.76 x 17.14 cm)

Nothing is cookie-cutter or as simple as being mad, sad, or happy. We all have complex emotions, and I'm trying to portray that complexity. For this particular piece, I'm trying to convey someone with anxiety, but they're trying to mask it with fake confidence.



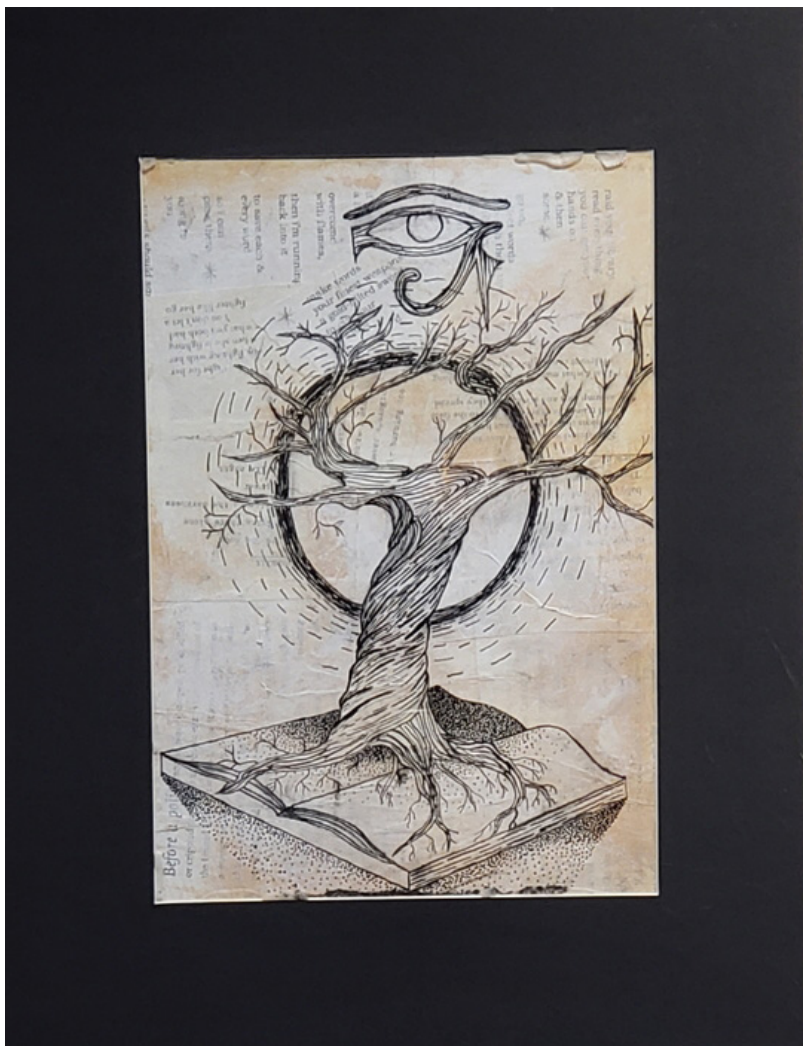
Elizabeth Miller
Glenwood Springs High School
EXPECTATIONS, 2019
Video; 2:33 min.

This film represents how society's expectations affect young girls today. Everyone wants to follow expectations in order to be accepted. In the end, some girls break away from society's expectations (woman with tape), some never break away (the violinist), and some fold to the pressures (the dancer).



Rustyn Randolph
Glenwood Springs High School
Musical Aurora, 2020
Charcoal on painted board
40 x 30 in (101.6 x 76.2 cm)

When I was younger, I was more interested in the musical arts. I played the flute from the age of ten until thirteen, and then I played saxophone for another year. It wasn't until I started high school that I started taking visual art as an extracurricular class. This decision to make visual art an everyday part of my life has helped me grow—I thoroughly enjoy making beautiful art and plan to do so for the rest of my life.



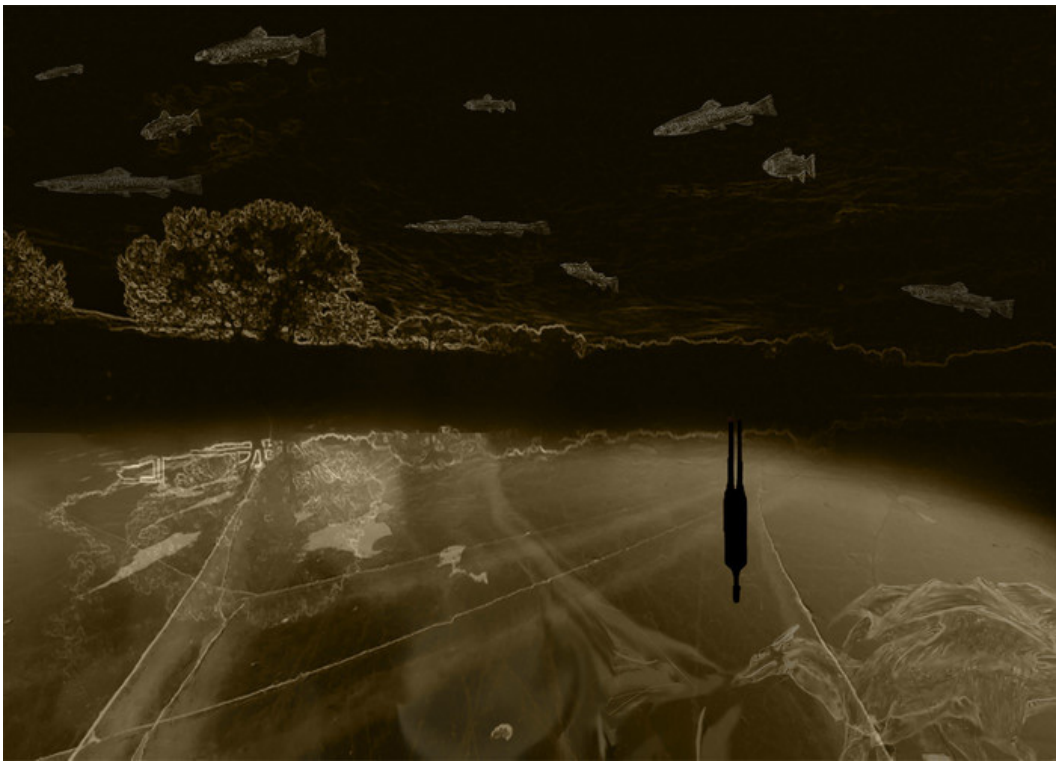
America Gonzalez Arias
Glenwood Springs High School
Immortality, 2019
Black ink on paper
18 x 15 in (45.72 x 38.1 cm)

When starting this pen and ink drawing, I wanted to lay out some of my deepest beliefs. The moon illuminating the tree and the book describes the way I am, the true version of myself in front of the moon—she knows my darkest secrets and doesn't judge me.



Katharine Malloy
Glenwood Springs High School
Corpus Creaturae, 2019
Colored pencils on matte board
19 x 10 in (48.26 x 25.4 cm)

The flowers contrast the black of the water that submerges the girl to represent how a sense of self is what protects her from the harsh reality that threatens her. As the flowers flow through her body, they change and become warmer—the warmest parts are at her core.



Elizabeth (Lizi) Barsness
Glenwood Springs High School
Serendipity, 2020
Photography, drawing, digital
manipulation
25 7/10 x 36 in (65.27 x 91.44 cm)

This piece sardonically emulates the general impression of uneasiness. It does so by placing whimsical creatures and unreasonable fears within a beautiful yet isolated landscape.



Perla Lerma Medina
Coal Ridge High School
The Coming of Age, 2019
Wire sculpture
8 x 2 1/2 x 10 in (20.32 x 6.35 x 25.4 cm)

Through my artwork, I wanted to acknowledge how much we take life for granted. From toddlers to grown adults, we spend most of our time thinking about growing up and becoming this great person we envision ourselves to be. We don't realize how important it is to enjoy every stage of our lives and focus on the present.



Luke Penton
Colorado Rocky Mountain School
*Nine Types of Industrial
Pollution*, 2020
Collage, paint, and ink on
wood panels
5 x 3 x 1 ft (1.5 x 0.9 x 0.3 m)

Focusing on corporate large-scale emissions from coal-burning factories and the severely commercialized use of livestock for food, this work reflects the chaos of cities and the high demand for consumption. It's designed to provoke thought about our everyday and the effects of greenhouse gas emissions.



Eliana Suarez
Glenwood Springs High School
The Hidden Identity, 2018
Charcoal on board
39 1/2 x 30 3/4 in (100.33 x 78.1 cm)

I believe that hands are extremely expressive and symbolic. In the grand scheme of identity, my piece shows how identity can be shown with the smallest of actions.



Julia Curry
Glenwood Springs High School
Of Those Who, 2019
Acrylics, modeling paste
18 x 12 in (45.72 x 30.48 cm)

I was inspired by a black-and-white photograph depicting two women holding a man in a garden, but applying these colors deepens the story more. Are they holding him, or are they dragging him away to an unfortunate fate? Is he serene, or has he been harmed, and is he now unconscious? It is up to viewers to decide whether the work is beautiful or unsettling.



Ava Lee
Roaring Fork High School
Kennedy and Luke, 2020
Charcoal on board
32 x 40 in (81.28 x 101.6 cm)

I came across a photo of a girl and her dog peering out a window, reminding me of my younger sister, Kennedy, and our pit bull, Luke. My charcoal represents a moment in our childhood that we will take with us through our adult lives. It's a symbol of what growing up means to us as sisters.

2020 Young Curators

Aspen High School
Eryn Brettmann

Coal Ridge High School
Kiona Carrasco
Logan Cox

Glenwood Springs High School
Sebastian Arreola
Annika Bucchin
Jenna Golden

Rifle High School
Lily McCann-Klausz

Exhibiting Artists

Coal Ridge High School
Cerise Cox, Perla Lerma Medina

Colorado Rocky Mountain
School
Luke Penton, Sarah Teague

Glenwood Springs High School
America Gonzalez Arias, Elizabeth
Barsness, Julia Curry, Avery
Hughes, Katharine Malloy, Amanda
McGill, Elizabeth Miller, Rustyn
Randolph, Celia Anne Scruton,
Eliana Suarez, Frenna White

Rifle High School
Jocelyn Abbott, Andrea Delgado,
Anahi Gutierrez Martinez, Melanie
Rodriguez, Iris Santana, Aline
Trevizo

Roaring Fork High School
Renee Bruell, Letey Crownhart,
Ava Lee

Aspen Art Museum
Aspen Art Museum
Aspen Art Museum
Aspen Art Museum

637 East Hyman Avenue
Aspen, Colorado 81611
aspenartmuseum.org

Admission to the AAM is
FREE courtesy of Amy and
John Phelan

This publication accompanies the Young
Curators exhibition *What We Are Made Of*,
on view at aspenartmuseum.org, April 18–
May 3, 2020.

AAM education programs are made possible by
the Questrom Education Fund.

All texts © 2020 Aspen Art Museum. All
rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced in any manner without the
written consent of the publisher.