

Pratt Artist Statement

08 December 2024

Personal Symbols

I fell in love with Frida Khalo at a young age. I was first introduced to her through my mom, when she gifted me a book containing information on Frida and all of the artwork she created throughout her life. I actually do not think I have a favorite piece. There are several artworks I appreciate so it is difficult to choose one. However a piece that held great significance in my youth was “The Wounded Deer”. I have slowly grown out of my obsession with this piece over the years as I have been introduced to new pieces and it is still the first thing that comes to mind. The first time I saw this painting, it was not in a conventional way. Instead of seeing it in a gallery, I saw it printed on a traditional mesh mercado bag. Colored in deep green, the mercado bag was only sold on the streets of Mexico. The image itself is eye-catching, it is Frida's Face plastered on the body of a deer with several arrows piercing into the body. It is in your face but also vulnerable. To me the painting has maternal qualities because that is how I first experienced it. When I think of deers I imagine a soft and gentle nature, but in this piece she has taken this soft body and brutalized it by piercing it with arrows in a juxtaposition. This wounded body with Frida's face attached, is a symbol for her sorrows. The image is sadder than it was when I was a kid. When I was a kid it did not look as wounded but more resilient. Maybe I could not see the tears on her face because they faded into the dark green of the bag but what I saw was stoicism. As an artist now, I add symbols in my artwork to establish the overall theme of the piece. I also

pick up symbols I see in my day to day life and reflect it in an art piece. A symbol I'm fond of depicting is the star. To me it's a very lucky shape but it's about more than just its design. It feels similar to writing a signature because my name means blackstar. This approach to symbolism was borrowed from Frida Kahlo. She has influenced the themes and use of the human body in the artwork I create. The body as a symbol is fascinating. You carry it with you your whole life and it constantly changes. Everybody has a different relationship with their body. Frida had a strenuous relationship with her body dealing with poor health and injury early on in life which led her to explore the feelings she had towards these complications in her artwork. She's taught me to see that a body is another way to tell a story but also to recognize my own personal symbols to communicate my human experience.