

“Visualizing the Fruit of the Spirit”

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by

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This Signature Honors Project is one that I will be forever grateful for. When choosing the creative endeavor, it was to unlock the creative side of myself that had been locked away for a long time. I wanted to do something that was different from my focus of biology, chemistry, and anthropology courses. I wanted to create because that’s what I’m designed to do, and I did not want to suppress that any longer.

In creating this series of digital paintings titled, “Visualizing the Fruit of the Spirit,” the initial goal was to have nine total pieces, one for each fruit of the Spirit, based on the Bible verse, Galatians 5:22-23. The verse reads, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” I chose to do a body of work based on the fruit of the Spirit to create a visualization of what I value in the Bible. Creating a visual representation helps me to better understand and connect with the words I am reading. However, I very quickly learned how difficult it would be to create nine pieces in the amount of time allotted. Thus, nine initial pieces became four pieces that would capture multiple qualities of the fruit of the Spirit in each piece.

Each piece was created in Procreate. Any resolution and compositional adjustments were finalized using Photoshop, and then the pieces were printed on a large format Epson printer. Throughout the process of making the digital paintings, I learned to be content with having patience in getting each piece done. The first and second pieces took 66 hours and 61 hours, respectively, because I was focused on painting an exact replica of the photo references. It felt almost robotic because I was trying to get an exact result instead of letting myself flow. As I got to the third and fourth paintings, which took 33 and 21 hours, respectively, I learned to create more organically and to embrace less perfection.

I did not need to create the paintings digitally, but I chose this medium because I felt it was the best option for the time allotted. I initially wanted to use a mix of colored pencils and gouache because I enjoy working with colored pencils, and gouache is a new medium that I wanted to try out. However, by creating digital paintings, I was able to learn how to work in layers, enabling me to adjust saturation and opacity; both aspects that helped me visualize and emulate the qualities of the fruit of the Spirit.

Overall, my work is subjective because they convey how I visualize the fruit of the Spirit. In the beginning, I did struggle with balancing the need to get work finished and my need to feel connected with the work. However, as time went on, it became easier to connect each digital painting with the fruit(s), or qualities, I intended each piece to represent. It was also easier for me to enjoy the process and see the fruition of my work. After rendering and manipulating each piece to visualize the respective fruit(s), my understanding of each word became clearer. From completing this series of paintings, I have gained confidence in the skills I have learned and in creating pieces in a medium that I enjoy using. I know that in the future, I will be using the skills and stylistic choices I learned this year to continue making art. I want to thank my mentor, Professor Blake, for teaching me and advising me throughout the process of creating this work; I know that what I have learned from her will be taken with me as I continue my art journey. In the end, I hope that my art portrays an interpretation of each fruit of the Spirit that is understandable.



Title: "joy and peace"
Medium: Digital painting

This image is a self-portrait. The reference photograph was taken by my friend at a fall retreat. It was taken during one of the most joyful and peaceful moments I've had during my senior year. There was a sense of bliss and a feeling of joy that was so genuine that I wanted to express that in my composition. For the abstract background, my mentor had the idea of creating a background by listening to songs I felt related to a specific fruit. Thus, I listened to two songs to create the background for this piece. The songs were "joyful" by Dante Bowe and "Pretty Brown Skin" by EUGENE KIING. Even though the initial brush strokes are not visible after liquifying them, I made the brush strokes to the beat of each song. My mentor also gave me advice about creating the background with a cool tone to contrast with the warm tone of the subject, which is also implemented in the next three digital paintings as well.



Title: "love, gentleness, and kindness"

Medium: Digital Painting

This painting depicts a mother, father, and baby, with the mother gently kissing the baby. For me, it represents love, kindness, and gentleness because of how gentle a mother's touch can be to a child. I also liked how fondly the father is looking down at the baby. My hope is to capture love, kindness, and gentleness through the lens of a familial unit. For the background, I listened to "Slip Away" by Elaine, which is more of a romantic love song, but the fluidity and some sharpness with which she sings is what I followed when creating the background. In comparison to the first digital painting, there is no warping or liquifying, so the initial brush strokes are as they were. Lastly, the abstract background for this image is slightly bluer than in the first piece. The reference photo used for this piece is not my own; the photographer is William Fortunato.



Title: "self-control and patience"

Medium: Digital painting

This painting depicts a mother in the act of feeding her child. When I found the reference photograph, I could see how multiple traits could be visualized, and it was a matter of how I wanted to separate them. This piece depicts a fully rendered painting of a baby with a lower opacity and less rendered painting of the mother. The lower opacity and decreased rendering of the mother was intentional because the subject of this piece was the baby. To me, the baby visualized self-control and patience because I felt that within patience especially, there's a hopefulness with waiting for something. The abstract background is bluer with mixes of purple and white. I liquified the background with lighter colors around the baby to further emphasize the focus on the baby. I listened to "Thinking of You" by Joesef for the background; inspiration was not drawn from the lyrics, but rather from the tune of the song and how the musician sang it. The reference photo used for this digital painting belongs to Eli Asenova.



Titled: "goodness and faithfulness"

Medium: Digital painting

For this piece I used the same reference as I did for "self-control and patience"; however, the mother is the main subject of this digital painting. To me, the mother represents goodness and faithfulness as she follows through with feeding her child. She is now mostly rendered, while the baby is less saturated and opaque. Not every aspect of the mother is fully detailed, like her jewelry; this was a personal preference. In this piece, the abstract background is liquified and more vibrant around the mother since she is the main subject. I listened to "Halo" by Beyonce while making the abstract background for this piece. The decision to lower the opacity of the baby was to help emphasize that the mother is the focal point of this piece. The background has more hints of periwinkle and blue than in the first three. Throughout the progression of the first to the third piece, I noticed that each background was getting bluer with hints of purple, so I wanted to continue that with the fourth piece. The reference photo used for this digital painting belongs to Eli Asenova.