

Artist statement  
"How long will I wait"

Damocles was a man given the gift of power. To become lord of his own life he would be appointed king. The catch of the story is that he had to sit under a sword tied high above him hung in place by only a strand of his hair. What I take away from that story is that there is always peril in life, especially when you are in charge of it. At the beginning of covid, we all in a way were given control of our own lives all while under a danger, we couldn't control. I thought that an image of me sleeping soundly was a good representation of living under that sword constantly. Eventually, it doesn't mean much. You'll have to rest at some point. Being also in a clearly safe spot in my own room would reflect the chaotic nature of quarantine. Stuck in our own "safe" spaces. The lighting will reflect the mood, bright but somber as the room is dimly lit with fairy lights and sunlight. This with the addition of a soft blue, that will be pouring off the sword as it hovers above me. Blue has always been a color of strong energy for me connecting to chaotic forces in nature like the sky and the ocean. This connection will hopefully create a soft but intense moment. A reminder of how the beginning was peaceful in its stillness but heavy in context. For the metal frames, I want to create a bunch of sword fragments to line the bottom with. A pile of broken blades from those before me. It will creep up the right side so that the whole frame slants down and to the left towards the other paintings. The top right of the frame will just be metal that's been marred and scratched from dropping swords. In the center of the topped frame, there will be a shiny sword hanging proudly. Directly under it on top of the sword pile will be a crown resting weightlessly on the pile below. A good start to any hero's journey is the call to adventure, I think this is the first step.

***Canon Herbold***

***Rivers to Roads***

Due NOV 29

Advisors:

With my thesis I want to explore some of the emotions and situations that I dealt with through the quarantine process. I went back and forth between Boise Idaho and Portland Oregon, two very different spots. My experiences were so varied due to the vast differences in culture and location, that I think a series of oil paintings would help to create an interesting contrast of emotions within the works. I want to really follow the style of 19th century romanticism painters to get across a realistic but enhanced body of work. From my research I think that this style will be a good test of my abilities as it will require realism with a stylized approach, hopefully highlighting my skills and emotions in the works. Along with the paintings I want to make metal frames that show more of the story or exemplify what's being shown. Each painting will have a connection to the metal frame whether it will be additional details or a more symbolic connection. I hope that the combination of metal and oil will be an effective storyteller. Because that's really what this time was for me. the first generational story we will all collectively have. covid has impacted the world and it will be a focal point for the rest of our lives. This prevalence means that if we don't make our peace with it now, then it will stay with us. That's why my thesis is exploring this topic and after looking back on the last two years these are the questions I want to explore with my work.

“How can I show my story of the pandemic with all of its facets through painting? Can I make people understand the surreal nature of going between two places that are so different during such a chaotic time?” How will the paintings and frames convey the emotion? Can it be romanticized while highlighting the good and bad?”

This project relates to my past work by tying two of my most cherished mediums together. I started painting with oils when I was in 7th grade, cheap ones that really were better as face paint. My grandfather has always been an oil painter, and a man of deep thought. This drew me like a moth to the medium, and I've been in love ever since. I started by painting the landscapes of my home state, because there's nothing quite like the rolling mountains and valleys of Idaho. This helped to nurture my connection to the land, the same land I camped, fished and hunted on. Landscapes and stories in oil always carry emotion for me, and I want to highlight/protect that with steel. I always wanted to build weapons and armor when I was a kid. My second love has always been history and its heroes. This drew me to welding and in high school I did 2 years at the Dennis Technical Center. That would lead me down a path of art using metal work. I was lucky enough to get my first job in the art world working for a local metal artist and helping to install, prep, and build several works. It's a marriage of my first art medium and my first professional art medium. What could be a better way to explore the emotions and stories of my first pandemic?

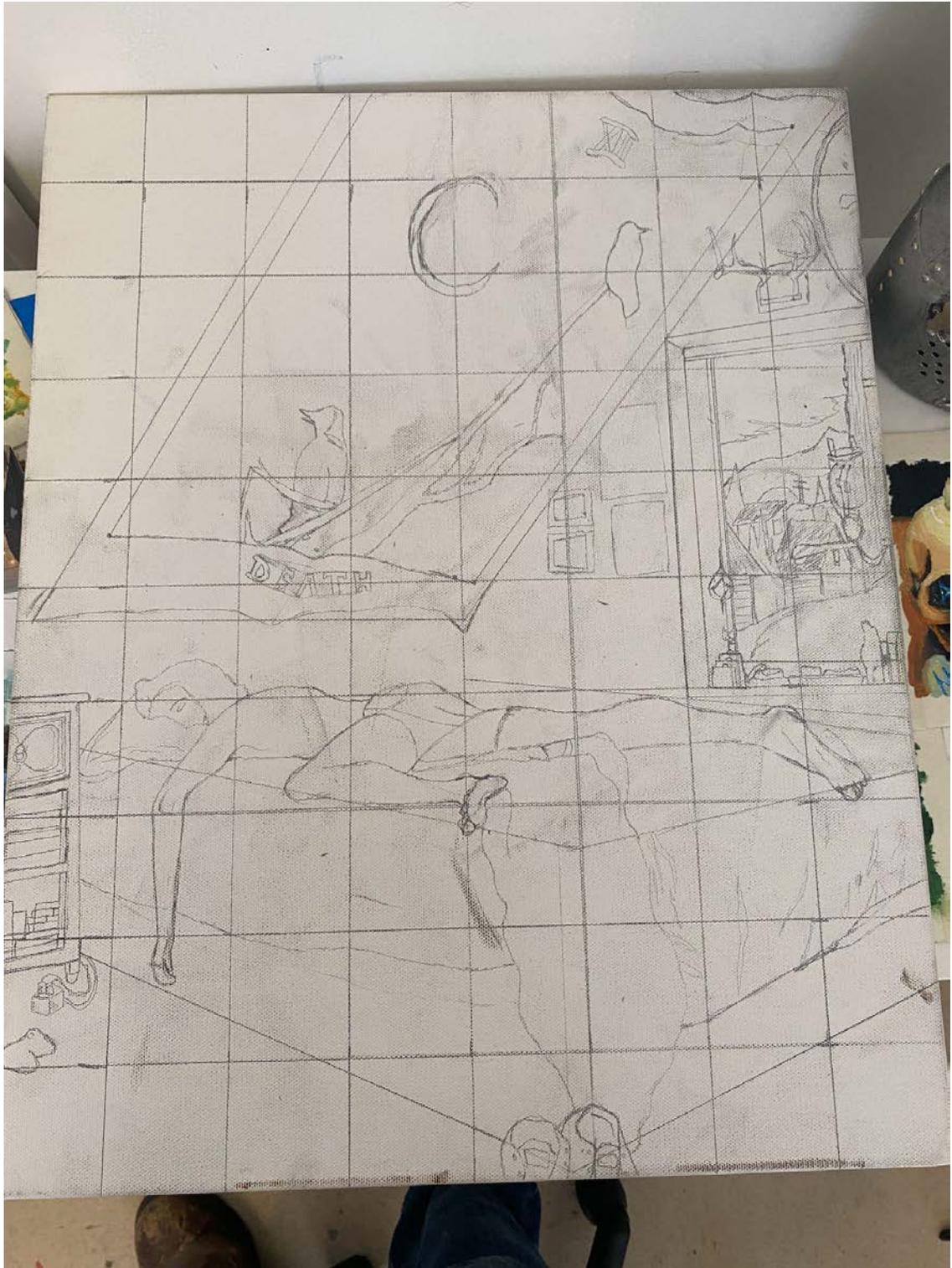
The artists I will be using as inspiration are mainly the painters from the 19th century romanticism movement. I am particularly interested in the Hudson River Valley painters as they are the first fully American art movement and in many ways captured the awe of the American landscape. They were able to really weave these incredible tales out of their paintings. That's

what I want to capture in my paintings the emotions of my stories. The work of Albert Beirstight is especially influential. Works like Landers peak helped to show me how the emphasis and use of color and scale can truly heighten a scene. He's also a role model as he not only made a living painting but also used it to travel and see the beauty that america has to offer. I hope to bring this level of intensity to my paintings and I will be studying his use of scale, pallet, and light to help me achieve this. I will be studying and taking inspiration from several different artists. I will be looking at the work of August Friedrich Schenck, James Webb, James Archer, Hans Grude, Joseph turner, and Blair leighton. For my metal work I will be researching different framing techniques and how different artists produce useful but elegant products. I will be looking for a style that I feel highlights the romanticism of the paintings.

My thesis will consist of four large oil paintings and their metal frames. Each one will be 16" by 20" on canvas. I will be using a series of photos, diary entries, and memories of quarantine to create scenes that bring forth the stories and feelings I want to convey. For the Portland entries I will be going for a more somber and lonely tone. I plan to use more surreal imagery and color to help romanticize the slipping of the world. This will be in harsh contrast from the other two setbacks in idaho. I will highlight the open spaces and people by using a brighter pallet. The framework will vary with each one depending on the symbolic theme it is addressing. I will be using 1/8" steel to create the various frames. That way it is strong but also light. My plan is to create scenes and connections by using different metal techniques. Such as cutting out detailed images or creating items out of steel helping the frame bridge to the painting it wraps. Eachone will be connected to the piece it displays, and carry its own symbolism.

I have been working on the four paintings in concept but I started to do a trail run of the first image I have chosen. That besides my research has been my main focal point of work these last few weeks. The rough title so far is "How long will I wait" . I will dedicate myself to sleeping in my room in portland. The sun will be just hinting through the window but most of the light will come from my lights. Above my sleeping form will be a sword glowing a dull blue and floating only a couple inches above me. This is to call reference to the story of Damocles, where a sword is hung above a king's head ready to drop at any moment.

My schedule for these projects is to create all the paintings first. I think that giving each one a month will be sufficient. After that I will spend the rest of the time on the frameworks and metal. My final vision for this project is four stand alone pieces, that when shown together fully explain a piece of my covid story. And really a piece of my life. For my thesis I want to create four large paintings with individual frames that connect to my quarantine experience and story. The goal of this series is to help me capture my experiences and stories so that I can reflect, grow, and share. Thank you.





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Canon Herbold

GFA

2/23/2022

## Abstract

With my thesis, I explore some of the emotions and situations that I dealt with through the quarantine process. I went back and forth between Boise Idaho and Portland Oregon, two very different spots. My experiences were so varied that I think the series would have an interesting contrast of emotions.

To make this thesis a reality I have been working hard on not only my painting skills but also my foundations. I began this project by using a mixture of Burnt Sienna and paint thinner to create a base wash for these works. After the canvas has been prepped and dried the first layer of oil paint is applied. In this stage, I'm working on shapes and laying down the bases for the values in the future. From this foundation, I work on adding the proper values and hues to create the desired scene.

During my work I have been trying to move away from a base sketch, using the paint in its entirety. This has really improved not only my confidence in rendering with oil, but also the feel of the work. The looser feel helps with the emotion of the images making them feel almost dream-like.

Through the work, I feel that I have accomplished some personal goals. I pitched this thesis to take a hard look back on my time during the pandemic, and in looking back, hopefully, find some peace to take away. I chose images that represented different emotions and places during the pandemic. I view the entire experience in a very different light than I did at the start of the year. These moments that I have been painting were ones that I so easily overlooked and wrote off. Their power has come back into my life, I'm excited to share these works with all of you and show you what I mean.

Hello everyone!

I would like to start this thesis presentation by saying thank you to everyone who came out to see what I've been working on this past semester. It means a lot to me that you would come and listen to my story today.

Also I respectfully acknowledge that I live and work on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral lands of the Indiegenuous peoples of the pacific northwest.

So without further ado, let's just get into it!

I started painting with oils when I was in 7th grade, cheap ones that were better as face paint if you like heavy metals in your skin. Where did this itch to paint spring from? A man named Don Stastny who is among you now! My grandfather has always been my favorite artist and a man I deeply admire. His passion for painting rubbed off on me at a young age and has helped me navigate my career. He has given me the best art advice I've ever received. Quite simply, know when to stop. This influence drew me like a moth to the medium, and I've been in love ever since.

I started by painting the landscapes of my home state because there's nothing quite like the rolling mountains and valleys of Idaho. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention some earlier influence in my landscapes by the late great Bob Ross. These paintings helped to nurture my connection to the land, the same ground I camped, fished and hunted on. Landscapes and stories in oil always carried emotion for me.

I chose to center my work around Covid. This is the first generational story we will all collectively have. Covid has impacted the world, and it will be a focal point for the rest of our lives. We will be asked by our children what it was like, and there will be books about it, movies, tv shows, its history now, our history. This prevalence means that if we don't make our peace with it now, then it will stay with us.

For me, covid has been a time of extreme growth and turbulence. When I started this thesis, I outlined in my proposal how quarantine was a time of darkness, with sadness and loneliness being the blazing themes. The isolation that came with covid

really narrowed my vision. Many times it felt as though I would wake back up in different places, brought back to life by the significance of this part in my story. At first, these fleeting moments slipped by without a thought, and the rolling of time would continue once again.

I began to take photos of what I was looking at or writing down what I felt brought a sense of grounding back to my soul. This stockpile of memories, both digital and physical, holds so much exciting information about my covid experience I doubt that I will ever hit the bottom of that well. So with my thesis, I wanted to explore some snapshots of my quarantine/covid life. While I endured covid, I went back and forth between Boise, Idaho (my hometown), and (my new city) Portland, Oregon. If you aren't aware, these are two very different spots.

My Home town is the capital of Idaho and it is three times smaller than Portland. It's a very quiet spot with a small town feel despite being a city. I loved growing up there. I have family and friends in droves and know the area like the back of my hand. When I moved to portland before the covid bomb I was still getting use to the big city, all the people, its homeless, its traffic, noise and buildings blocking out the mountains.

During the pandemic, Boise stayed a quiet place, while Portland dealt with fires, riots and lockdowns. Being in Portland during the pandemic felt very surreal, I felt like I was constantly waiting for it all to boil over. Everyone was very scared and kept to themselves and that's how my time there felt. Boise was a little more laid back and for better or worse there is comfort in that. In many ways it became a haven for me when things in the city were becoming too much or when I was going stir crazy in my room.

These differences were intense and will always be a large part of my covid timeline. That's why my thesis explores this topic while also looking back on the last two covid years.

These are some of the questions I had hoped to answer.

1. “How can I show my story of the pandemic with all of its facets through painting?”
2. Can I make people understand the surreal nature of going between two places that are so different during such a chaotic time?”
3. How will the paintings convey the emotion?
4. Can it be romanticized while highlighting the good and bad?”

I decided to do these paintings large enough to get across the details but small enough that I had the time to do it. They are 16” by 20” on canvas, while the smaller portals are 20 inches in diameter. There are 8 pieces of work in total, 4 larger paintings that depict the moments I choose and 4 smaller “portals” that depict the transitional travel.

### **Audience**

My ideal audience for this body of work would be people who also started a new chapter during the pandemic. The pandemic came at the start of the new year at a time of resolutions and big changes before the summer and spring. Young professionals in a new city, students at a new school, new parents, travelers, and people who started a new dream.

Everyone who had to put plans on hold or get through the hoops that were thrown their way. These are the people who I believe will resonate with this body of work. I of course believe that everyone will find something to take away from it but these are the people I thought of as I put paint on canvas.

## ***Inspiration***

The artists that inspired me at the start of this thesis journey were the romanticism painters from the 19th century. This movement interested me because it emphasized inspiration, subjectivity, and the importance of the individual. The paintings are full of emotion and meaning with clear subjects and scenes. This aligns with my goals for my thesis.

From here, I became particularly interested in the Hudson River Valley painters. As they are the first thoroughly American art movement and in many ways captured the awe of the American landscape. They were able to really weave these incredible tales out of their paintings. That's what I want to capture in my paintings the emotions of my stories.

The work of Albert Bierstadt is especially influential. Works like Lander's peak helped to show me how the emphasis and use of color and scale can indeed heighten a scene. He's also a role model as he not only made a living painting but also used it to travel and see the beauty that America has to offer. I also look heavily at the work of Sarah Cole, James Webb, Hans Grude, Joseph Turner, Helen Mary Knowlton and Blair Leighton.

I highly recommend you check out any of these fine artists' work, and you won't be disappointed. I feel I must point out that I support the art that these individuals made, as it captured the emotion and beauty of the American west. I do not resonate with the manifest destiny that is deeply connected to these artists and their work.

For me it is about the sublime awe of raw nature at the height of its untouched beauty. When I see these painted images of the untouched American west I can't help but think about how lucky these people were to see such untouched power. Huge rolling mountains that when you look at your breath goes short as if you're at the top, rolling forests deep enough to feel the cool of the shade, and water that looks as though it sparkles.

As my thesis progressed, I found influence from other artists as well. Ones that were a little closer to this century. Mark Maggiori is a french artist who paints the American west—he's been a considerable influence on my work not only because of the subject matter but his liberal use of color. He's an excellent example of using focused shapes to get figures across to the audience. He paints big skies and rolling mountains and it always reminds me of home.

Another great artist is Glenn Brown. He's an English oil painter who specializes in these amazingly intricate portraits and figures done in swirling oil. He captures so much movement and expression in his work and is a master of embracing that dark. Something that I am still learning to do. His mark-making and use of color were also huge inspirations.

There are honestly too many to entirely mention whose work not only inspired me but left me in awe—artists such as Chris long, Micheal Brophey, Rowan Carey, and Michaël Borremans. Please go check all these people out and enjoy their work as I have.

### ***Process***

To make this thesis a reality, I have been working hard on not only my painting skills but also my foundations. When I began to work on the first piece, I used a grid method that I learned from my ap art class. Although this is a very effective method for rendering pictures, it ends up being a lot like painting with numbers. It worked well. I did my second painting the same way. Although this time, I began this project by using a mixture of Burnt Sienna and paint thinner to create a base wash. This blanketed base of color helps tie the image together and brings warmth to the layers of paint. I enjoyed this result so much that every other painting starts with a consolidating wash.

This year I was fortunate enough to take my first painting class at pnca. Materials and methods with Micheal Lazarus. This class really helped me to improve my oil

painting. It helped me to start my paintings without too much sketching and to really trust the process. I learned great techniques in making realistic paintings using proper layering and canvas prep. These skills along with Ardis DeFreece's guidance really changed the way I paint for the better. After these new skills, I started each canvas a little differently. I kept the wash throughout but for the final two landscapes I didn't sketch out the image first. On the third, I used a light opacity oil paint to do a rough layout, placing shadows and highlights on top of the base.

For the final piece, I simply started painting the wash layer, adding in pure shapes such as the car and buildings, building up values and sharpening the images as I went. This was an exciting change to my process and brought a much more lively feel to the paintings. Starting loose gives it energy. Refining gives it character. To sum it all up, After the canvas has been prepped and dried, the first layer of oil paint is applied. In this stage, I'm working on shapes and laying down the bases for the values in the future. From this foundation, I work on adding the proper values and hues to create the desired scene.

It's always hard to know when a body of work is done. For these paintings my main goal was getting across the emotion of the scene. What I remembered feeling in that moment or the feeling that the image gives me when I studied it. Using the excellent advice of my grandfather, I tried not to push the work too hard. If I felt that it was complete, even if there was a loose approach to detail or face I let it stand. After some time away I'd stare at it from a distance judging the values and seeing what caught my attention. Once I felt that the image guided me to the proper places, only then would I call it complete.

### ***Works one by one***

Now I'm gonna walk you through each work one by one and say a few things about them. And naturally will start at the beginning.

### **Damocles**

This is the first piece in the Rivers to Roads series entitled Damocles. This is a picture of me in the height of COVID season, laying in my bed up in my room, slumbering the hours away. This piece was inspired by its namesake, the Greek myth of Damocles. The story goes that a man is given a chance to be king as long as he sits beneath a naked sword held above his throne by three strands of hair. This reminded me of lockdown in the sense that we all were really given a chance to be the lords of our own time, and yet we had to acknowledge that death looms above us. Maybe a more accurate name is fear.

This piece was a great star for my thesis because it pushed me out of my comfort zone. I rarely painted people at this point in the year, it wasn't until my oils class that I would begin to paint the human form more regularly. This made rendering myself in this odd position a fun challenge. On top of working on my anatomy, I also learned several glazing techniques that I used to add depth to my work. This would also help me bring some of the sierra back to the piece since I changed my starting process. This piece really will always resonate with me; it puts me right back in that room during that pandemic.

### **Coopers Fire**

My second piece of work entitled Coopers Fire is a gathering of my close friends during COVID. After a trip back to my hometown and the first vaccine, we were able to all get together again for the first time in what felt like years. In reality, it was probably a few months. After trudging through many months of the pandemic, this made the cost of visiting well worth it. We enjoyed each other's company, swapped stories and apocalyptic plans, and drank merrily. This was a moment I wanted to capture because I remember distinctly thinking it was like normal, it was a break. To capture the warmth of the space I wanted to center your attention to the light in the room. Much like a fire it creates a space of warmth and friendship. We all are facing the center of the room, and an unspoken agreement to be present to one another lingers.

I love this piece quite a bit. Even though this was my hardest painting to date. I learned so much about the rending of people through this painting. It's a skill I would

tentatively say I understand. My real breakthrough with this painting though was the use of shapes, looking not for a nose or an eye but for the shadow across the face. How the light hits the cheek and what that reveals to the audience. It helped me break down the figures in a cleaner way and overall really improved my painting abilities. I can't wait to go sit by that fire again.

### **Pandemic Snow**

The third painting is entitled Pandemic Snow . This image I chose is a picture I took during the first covid winter. It's a shot of my Portland neighborhood from my front porch. We had just had a dusting of snow that day, and it was hushed. I was drawn to this image because of the beautiful palette of grays that it held. It matched the stillness of a locked-down city, frozen over, waiting for spring to bring news and warmth. I felt that although it was somber, there was a tiny bit of life peaking its way out. This piece let me work on my perspective.

I enjoyed the challenge quite a bit as I started this painting without any sketches. I learned quite a bit about angles while learning different techniques to find and produce them accurately on the canvas. For example, taking your brush and holding it along the street, then moving your arm, so the brush is now on your canvas. Or using a sharpie to make the angle clearer on the reference page. Using these tricks, the painting slowly came together. I love the way the sky sinks heavily towards the trees and roofs as if that cold gray is gonna swallow it all up.

### **Family Trees**

The final large painting is entitled Family Trees and depicts a ski lodge parking lot located in McCall, Idaho, during the new year of 2021. This image reminded me of my family who I was up there skiing with, although they aren't pictured here. It's the warmth of the blues of the snow and the ski, the closeness of the trees, and the soft glow of the lights. It feels cozy and happy, and I wouldn't be surprised if some soft song drifted by in the wind. This was the painting that I felt the most familiar with as I painted it. It's a call back to the beginning of my painting experience, a simple flat landscape with lots of emotion. Fitting that it would be the last one. I learned a lot about how light and hue change the emotion of the piece, even though this is the darkest painting on the wall. It still holds a lot of warmth and light.

## **Portals**

The portals depict my moments of travel between the two states. Travel has always been a pillar of my life. I constantly moved between spaces whether it was across state lines or on my weekly trips across town as I shifted between my parent's houses. During travel, I have always found that there is a suspension of time. You're on a literal journey.

These moments for me have acted as a chance for reflection. What am I doing, why am I doing it, how do I feel, how will I feel? These breaks from our every day are a great time to look at the path we are walking on and ask the stones some questions. I chose to incorporate the two main methods of travel. I used planes and my car, a white jeep named Appa.

These paintings acted as a break from my thesis journey as well. I used a looser approach and tried some new techniques, really just broke the mold. Much like they were intended to do, they gave me a break from the bigger work so I could come back with fresh eyes. I hope you find the same respite I did.

### ***The work all together.***

Altogether these works carry my story of the pandemic. Portland carries a much more somber feel for me now than it did in the past, and I wanted to make sure that translated in the works. For the Portland based pieces, I focused on myself as the focal point, using a more grayed palette with an emphasis on quiet and isolation. That being said, I also wanted them to feel calm and almost comforting.

These are shots of my home, after all. Although there were periods of loneliness throughout the pandemic, my Homebase was much more than a grayed prison, it often felt more like a seed—Waiting for a change, a chance—That's what the use of light in the two paintings conveys for me. Through the grey, there are glimmers of light, of life.

The Boise paintings are meant to carry that light of life across. They are open and warm with lots of exciting colors and lights. I tried to focus on others when I painted these images, whether that was my friends around the living room or my family in the cabin behind me in the forest shot. For me these Boise paintings represent a grown seed, something that I will always have and can always rely on. I hope when you look at them, you feel warm and rested.

Together they weave my pandemic. A story of new places, old friends, and at the center of it all me.

This body of work holds a lot of successes for me as an artist. The first image in the series "Damocles" was a challenge to start but I believe it is a very strong painting. The light comes in softly from the window thanks to the glazing, and really highlights my form well. I spent a lot of time on myself in this painting, and the challenging position I am in. dare i say it looks really good, there's a good range of color and hues making my form really pop. I deeply enjoy the way my bedroom rendering came about as well. It reminds me of the space and holds many small details. It's a dramatic scene.

Coopers fire is one of the more challenging paintings I've had to do as an artist. As fun as it is to try and paint some of your closest friends in a low light setting, it has its drawbacks. There were some challenges with the figures in the work. In fact I learned a lot of different techniques during the creation of this painting to deal with them. It was a great learning experience and I am definitely a better painter for the effort. They sit well in the space now framed by what I think is a very successful light. I love the glow that this painting gives off, especially in the reflection of the window. It was a lot like hiking, you have to earn that beautiful view.

Pandemic snow had its fair share of challenges and successes. The perspective on this piece added a lot of great depth and details while also adding more than a few frustrations. The street and the cars on it brought me a mixed bag of emotions and more than once did I have to remind myself that it's all a process. The building in particular I

consider a huge success, I love the light and how it affects the colors with that soft glow. The sky and trees really add a lot of depth, and I think help the glow of the building really pop. It's a great piece.

Family trees were the most natural painting out of the bunch to create. I felt that this painting had minimal challenges and a lot of successes. It came out with a great feel thanks to that darker forest and sky. Drawing the eye right down to the lit snow and trees. It feels very close to my reference and reminds me of my family.

I would love for this work to be shown in one of two settings. I believe there are a lot of benefits to a classic gallery showing. The white walls will help my pieces pop, while people can quietly approach them and admire my work in an academic sense. I would love to sit and listen to people's thoughts on the works and how they relate to their own pandemic stories. I would be lying if I said I wasn't going to apply to a few after this semester.

The second place I would want these to be displayed in would be a lively brewery or coffee shop. A place where people are celebrating being around one another and embracing the community we are all sharing. Maybe they wouldn't receive as much attention, but I'd love for them to soak up that energy and warmth.

As for my next step, I hope to keep creating art that I love while exploring the new opening portland. I will be working to expand my mediums and creative energy while continuously learning and loving making art. I pitched these originally with some intricate metal frames so maybe that will be the next step for these pieces. I look forward to after graduation where I can begin to find out where my path will lead and how my creativity will play into it. I hope to have a store open and maybe do a few shows, join a collective or two. Whatever it is, I await it with open arms.

**Thank you all so much for your time**

**My Name is Canon Herbold**

**And that is my Work**

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