

BIO

Jenna Audra Smith (b.1999) is a North European/South African, predominantly surrealist, drawer, painter, printmaker, filmmaker, and poet. She produces work inspired by complex personhood, social anthropology, place, nature, nostalgia, dogma, reality, philosophy, fear, and comfort. Her work balances free expression and narrative, and is often transformed by the compelling relationships and conversations that can occur across multiple mediums.

STATEMENT

Through many different metaphorical and physical approaches, my art strives to grasp the interconnectedness of the self, humanity, reality, and nature. Guided by symbols of the unconscious mind as I explore means of narrative, I am inexhaustibly inspired by the all-encompassing and sacrosanct connection between instinct and place, and the profound relationship between these two entities.

The mechanisms of humanity form the foundation of my work — because of the profound importance of our birth from nature and unconditional independence on the earth, and the evolution of our interactions with our environments and one another. As realistically as I am able, I depict natural and learned ways of life organically as one, to imply and express the unity between humankind and all of its perplexities, and the delicacy of the fauna & flora with which we coexist.

Internal conflict, loss of control, power, greed, perception, and ego play on what we have created as a society. I depict this through a looming, unnamed force of disarray that both disguises itself and shifts before our very eyes, but is always just out of reach. As an immigrant coming to the U.S from a family widely dispersed across the globe in Norway, the Netherlands, and South Africa, my cultural background and experiences span many different ways of life. While I was enchanted by the vibrancy of downtown Seattle, I often felt a sense of diasporic otherworldliness. This appears in my work as transformative transposition and has spurred my fascination with behavior, belief, and awareness.

I allow my audience to enrich my own understanding of my work through their perceptions of my subject matter and symbology. This two-way communication with viewers through my art enhances the surreal wonder and mystery that fuel my thirst to understand our purpose, for belonging, and for life.

Instead of sitting with my trauma, the work allows me to redefine my experiences through personal mythology. Instead of sitting alone in the forest, searching for his lost heart, this *huldra* overcomes his past. This *huldra* gets to leave.