



FALL 2023 MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL TOUR CURRICULUM

Land That I Love

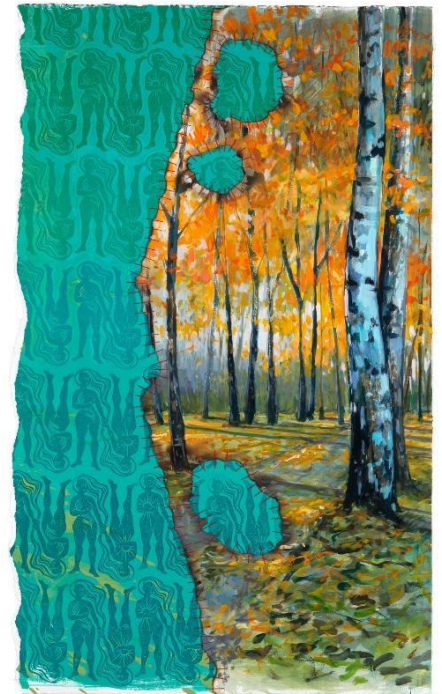
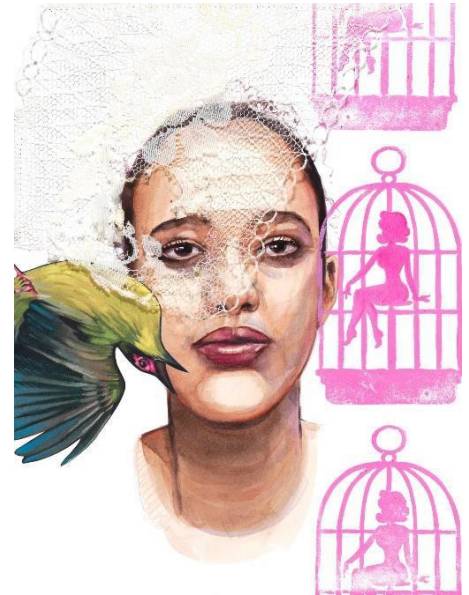
Ashley Cecil

September 7 2023 – January 6 2024

Becoming a mother and engaging in nature-based residency projects brought a revelation to Ashley Cecil and her work as an artist. Her vision of the parallels between the oppression of women and the domination of nature informs the Pittsburgh, Pa.- based artist's work in *Land That I Love*. The exhibition is Sept 7, 2023-Jan 6, 2024 in the Haley Gallery of the Albany Museum of Art.

"Ashley Cecil's work is beautiful and feminine, but most of all delicate," AMA Director of Curatorial Affairs Katie Dillard said. "The quality of her works is part of her message; and is a demand for better care, for both the environment and for all women." As an adult, a series of residencies at science and conservatory institutions sparked within her a new understanding of the divine and its female incarnations, Cecil said. "I witnessed how prolific, intelligent, resilient, generous, and just Mother Nature is," she said. "It became obvious that Earth is a body with waterways like a vascular system and an undulating surface like skin stretched over bone, folding in the crevices. Now, I cannot unsee these parallels in appearance, function, and in society's blatant disregard. From dowries and debts to deeds, we shed blood over seizure and control of the bodies of women and nature."

Cecil specializes in paintings and sculptural works of flora, fauna, and femininity that illustrate connections between the natural world and its human inhabitants. Her love affair with all things organic and wild blossomed as the result of studying landscapes with accomplished master painters in London while earning her master's degree at the Sotheby's Institute of Art, immersing herself in nature-inspired decorative arts collections in European museums, and painting from live observation at conservation institutions such as the National Aviary.



FIELD TRIP ACTIVITIES

- Students will be introduced to the role of museums in our community and why they are important to us.
- A museum educator will introduce the exhibition and the artist, and discuss any research or questions brought up by the students.
- They will then be shown a few key works from this exhibition in the Haley Gallery. While examining these works, we will discuss concepts of womanhood, motherhood, respect, pollution, and the intersections of art and nature. We will also discuss artistic technique, compositions, and media used to make a powerful statement. Students will be encouraged to speak as a group and individually, read wall labels aloud, and engage in analytical conversation with educators and peers.
- The guide will help the students with visual thinking strategies so that they may understand what the works are and why they were created.
- In the classroom, we will have access to various materials to create small works of art that address the above topics and that can be in conversation with Cecil's works.
- Students are encouraged to share their artwork with the class.

PRE AND POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to research the artist, Ashley Cecil, and read her artist statement that can be found on her website: ashleycecil.com. Below are suggested pre-and post-visit activities for this exhibition:

1. **Prepare Questions:** Encourage students to prepare questions about the art and the museum in advance. These questions can guide their exploration and foster critical thinking during the visit.
 2. **Discuss Museum Etiquette:** Review museum etiquette and behavior expectations with the students. This may include rules about not touching artwork, speaking quietly, and staying with the group. Stress the importance of respecting both the art and other visitors.
 3. **Assign Visual Analysis Opportunities:** Assign each student a specific work (see Ashleycecil.com) they will see in the gallery for them to do a visual analysis of before your visit. They can present their findings to the class during gallery time, promoting a deeper understanding of the art and fostering engagement.
 4. **Art Journaling:** Encourage students to bring sketchbooks or journals to the museum. They can use these to sketch their favorite pieces, jot down their thoughts and impressions, or take notes on the information provided in museum placards.
 5. **Post-Trip Reflection:** Post-trip activities help students reflect on their museum visit. This could include class discussions, written reflections, or creative projects inspired by the art they saw.
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