

*Way Back and Beyond* is an art exhibition that explores the whimsical qualities we encounter throughout our dreams. Through a diverse group of artists, working in a wide variety of mediums and styles, each work of art featured in *Way Back and Beyond* evokes this dreamlike feeling. This show features many different types of work—from abstract sculptures, to realistic paintings, to analog photography. The exhibition will start with these more realistic pieces and gradually get more and more abstract, until the pieces feel like objects that could only exist in a dream.

Since the show will progress from more realistic pieces, one of the first works shown will be Ben Poarch's *Stay Put*. This is a silver gelatin print of a photograph of a tree. Since the photo is a warm black and white, it gives a feeling of timelessness and whimsy. The branches of the tree twist around in unusual ways, and the composition frames a pile of rocks within these contorted branches. While it is a photograph, all of these qualities make this image feel like something out of a dream.

As the viewer goes through the exhibition, the works will become more and more abstract. One of the pieces that works as a transition from the realism into the abstraction is Maggie Skidmore's *Sacrificial Swan*. This three dimensional piece, made from plaster and gelatin, is a swan morphing into a pillow. This sculpture was made to discuss how birds' down feathers are still being used to stuff pillows. While the meaning is grounded in real life, visually it feels fantastical. Seeing a beautiful swan turn into a pillow, feels like a dark fantasy, opposite of how Cinderella's pumpkin was transformed into a coach. This work of art clearly portrays a swan and a pillow, but is not anything that exists in real life, so it works as a nice transition from the realistic pieces into the abstract pieces.

As the exhibition moves into more abstract art, Stephanie Alacon's *Just a Thought* will be shown. This is a ceramic piece is made up of several sharp and twisting noodle-like structures. Much of Alacon's work focuses on mental health, so this piece represents a physical manifestation of those dark thoughts. It is sharp and uninviting, making it seem like a nightmare. However the soft colors, like the pearly white, blues, and gold, as well as the piece's fragility, make it seem like a magical object straight out of a dream. While the noodles look intimidating, the movement in them looks soft and whimsical.

As visitors view *Way Back and Beyond* they will have the opportunity to see several different types of art, all of which evoke a dreamlike feeling. Going from more concrete subject matter, into abstract pieces, viewers will get to experience all kinds of dreamy works of art. Some will be lighter and fun, while others may be a bit darker in subject matter, but all of these works come together through their various whimsical qualities.