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Foundation Exhibition: *Loose Ends*

*Loose Ends* is a portrait made with Copic markers, surrounded by a collage of medical magazine clippings. The portrait features a girl with a red ribbon tightly wound about her head, covering portions of her face. The girl's expression is blank; she stares out into the distance. To the left of the girl, a crow appears to be tugging at the ribbon, causing it to unravel. The girl's hands are placed on her face, as if trying to hold the ribbon in place, but to no avail. Pertaining to the title, the phrase "loose ends" is defined as something left hanging, or having unfinished business. Due to the recent outbreak of COVID-19, I personally felt that my senior year of high school ended with several "loose ends". Several celebrated traditions, such as graduation, were changed, postponed, or cancelled, resulting in feelings of unfulfillment and frustration. This artwork encompasses my feelings in this regard. Here, the ribbon represents traditions and rituals. The attacking crow, a bird commonly associated with bad luck, symbolizes the virus. As such, the virus grabs hold of traditions and rituals, secure and known, and effectively thwarts them. The girl, with her blank expression, is powerless, blank and staring off into the distance. Here, the distance correlates to the distant disease-free future, or perhaps to the recent disease-free past. Surrounding the portrait, the collage of medical magazine clippings, pertinent to the virus, signifies the bombardment of information that further perpetuates anxiety, dread, and fear of the unknown, culminating in loose ends.

The stark color contrast of the crow against the light background effectively creates emphasis, and draws the eye into the piece. Additionally, the repetitive use of the color blue seen in the subject's clothes, eyes, and background strengthens the unity. Eye movement is successfully created through the variety of implied vertical and horizontal lines. For example, the horizontal lines of the background text advance the eye across the piece; likewise, the vertical line created by the crow, as well as the red ribbon, establish vertical movement. Finally, the scale of the crow, in comparison to the subject, reinforces the large impact COVID-19 has in each person's life.

When generating ideas for this project, I began with an emotional check-in. Most of my artwork derives from my feelings and emotions at the time of creation. Since the new normal that was introduced with the COVID-19 outbreak, I wanted to create a work to sum up my feelings surrounding it. After selecting my intention, I began the search for an artist to visually inspire my project, and chose Frida Kahlo, as Kahlo's work also typically revolves around her emotions. In *Loose Ends*, I utilize several signature elements found in Kahlo's work. First, I chose to express myself in portraiture, as almost all of Kahlo's work consists of portraits or self portraits. Additionally, like Kahlo, I selected animal imagery as a metaphor. I appreciate deep and complex nature imagery that compels the viewer to attentively consider the intention. Furthermore, I personally appreciate artwork that is not literal, but is abstractly represented through non-traditional visual elements, such as nature. In her *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*, Kahlo painted a black cat to symbolize bad luck; likewise I chose a black crow to represent the virus. Finally, as previously stated, the overall intention behind my work is an

expression of my personal feelings and emotions, like Kahlo's, to this historical event that continues to have an impact on my life.