

Sasha Ackerly - Artist Statement

My themes and process are rooted in intuition. I follow a pull before I fully understand it, and through that process begin to see what that piece wants to be. I've explored a wide range of mediums, including clay, charcoal, paint, photography, and digital work such as drawing, and photo or video editing. Moving between mediums feels natural to me because each one opens up a different way of thinking and experimenting. What starts as experimentation often becomes a way of working through memories, emotions, and the things that linger in the background of my mind.

Oftentimes, animals appear in my work because I'm instinctively drawn to them as familiar and grounding constants. They feel expressive, alive and authentic in a way that keeps my returning to them as subjects. I'm also interested in creatures that mix reality and imagination — an animal that looks almost real but has exaggerated or impossible qualities. Mythological creatures fall into that same space for me, especially those that connect to my sense of childhood imagination. Movies like *The Last Unicorn* first piqued my interest in the idea of beings that exist somewhere between the natural and imagined world.

Photography is another important part of my work, and I approach it with the same curiosity I bring to all my work. I'm interested in capturing moments in time — the essence of a person, an animal, or an experience — before it shifts. Part of that comes from wanting to hold onto something real, to let a moment live on even after the person or experience has changed or passed. Whether I'm photographing people, animals, or the environments around me, I'm drawn to images that feel alive and in the moment.

My artistic style and message are in a constant state of evolution. I'm still discovering what feels most authentic to me, and that discovery happens with each piece. What connects my work, whether it's finished or not, is the instinct to follow what pulls me in and feels genuine in the moment. Regardless of medium or material, I'm driven to make work that carries a sense of sincerity and accessibility – something open enough for viewers to bring their own interpretation.