

# We Strut





We Strut Creator:

# **Mya Johnson** **(she/her)**



**Age: 17**

# About the Creator

From a young age, I have always been interested in fashion and beauty. However, it did not take me long to see that the way I looked did not fit the ideal American standard of beauty. For a long time, I hated the fact that I have darker skin and a kinkier hair type than most. I thought I was cursed by God. As I got older, I realized that I was not the only one experiencing this feeling of inferiority. A lot of other young girls of color also feel the same pressure to conform to European standards of beauty. I realized that this feeling of inferiority is internalized racism (the internalization of racist beliefs about one's own ethnic group) rooted in white supremacy. When I came to this realization, I wanted to do something about it. When I noticed that institutional racism was not only having a mental effect on my health, but also causing unconscious biases I began a journey to take back my own spiritual freedom to the best of my ability. I started exploring different methods of self-care, changed my diet, and I challenged myself to reach out to new communities of people that I knew would help me grow internally. This magazine is for those who do not fit European standards of beauty. This magazine aims to create a community where women of color can support each other and create alliances because, for the longest time, I felt like I did not have that in my own life. I want to give that community to other people and to my younger self.



A large, vibrant pink heart with a thick yellow border is centered on a background of a bright blue sky filled with soft, white clouds. The heart's shape is symmetrical and occupies most of the frame.

**Thrifted Fashion**



















**Maria  
Berman  
(She/Her)  
Age: 16**



















# **Portia Hubregsen**

**(She/her)**

**Age:17**













**Camille  
Andrew  
(She/her)  
Age: 16**















# Credits

All pictures taken of Mya Johnson were taken by Allison Kalt. You can find her instagram at [allicat\\_fotos](#). The rest of the fashion pictures were taken by Mya Johnson.





# **Hair Care**



\*I am not a professional but these have worked for me

# MY FAVORITE PRODUCTS



# FOR COILY HAIR





## Conditioner

**1:**

### Trader Joes Tea Tree Tingle Conditioner

16 oz, \$12.00

## Conditioner 2:

### Shea Moisture African Black Conditioner Balance

12 Oz, \$10.98







**Oil 1 for hair  
growth:  
Castor Oil**

4 oz. \$6.99

**Oil 2 for scalp  
dryness:  
Jojoba Oil**

4 oz. \$13.97






# Styling gel

**Eco Style Black  
Castor & Flaxseed  
oil (doesn't  
flake)**

32 oz. \$10.51





A large, vibrant pink heart with a thick yellow border is centered on a background of a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The heart is the primary focus of the image.

**Self Care**



# Why is Self Care



## important?



By Mya Johnson

We all go through hardships and struggle at some point in our lives. If we do not take the time to check in with ourselves, it can be easy to burn out. Self-care can mean taking medication, going for a walk, listening to music, or even taking the time to breathe. I'm going to list some of my favorite self-care activities; then I invite you to do the same.

1. When I am feeling anxious, I forget to breathe. If I realize I am doing this, I take deep breaths, even if I am in public. No shame in breathing right?

2. I am a big fan of creating music playlists. If I want to relax, I will listen to one of my more chill music playlists. I make a conscious decision not to listen to sad music though, as this normally makes me feel worse. I use SoundCloud for listening to talented underground musicians of color.

3. Sitting in the sun can feel really nice no matter my mood.

4. Writing exactly what is on my mind helps me to reflect on my feelings.

5. Making sure I get enough sleep has a big effect on how I feel throughout the day.

6. Listening to spoken word poetry puts me in a headspace that inspires me to create more.

7. Sometimes something as simple as eating an orange helps my mood.



# **Now your turn!**

Try writing down some things that help ground you

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.





# **Art Submissions**



**Ximena Perez Rivero**

**Age: 17**

**(she/her)**



**Photograph of  
Hanan Sherka**



# Space (Excerpt)

**Hanan Sherka (she/her)**

**Age: 16**

I will not be like my mother  
And paint myself a muted white  
In an attempt to camouflage with your walls.  
The golden undertones of my brown skin would find a way to peek through anyways.

I will not be like my father  
And wait to see if maybe you will make room.  
If maybe you will realize I am just like you  
Because I am not.  
So I will take up all your space  
Colonize every corner  
Walk around like I own this place.  
Wear Minnie Jean Brown's legacy on my chest.

I will not scream.  
I will not speak a word.  
Or maybe I will  
But I won't need to.

Because my prideful heartbeat is enough to upset you.  
I will wear my hijab like a cape,  
speak Amharic like it is the only link to my birthplace.  
I will sing the song of my history like it is gospel,  
And drown you in all the glory that is woman.

I will take up all your space  
And you will be uncomfortable.



# Let Us Travel

## Ximena Perez Rivero

Let's go back to the elementary years  
To the age of Lily and Steve sitting on a tree K-I-S-S-I-N-G  
To the times where I thought 'hm, that boy is kinda cute.

Nah, that girl is cu-  
No no no You can't think that  
You'll be called a lesbian, fruity, una maricona'  
Let's go back to the time where I prayed:  
Por favor Dios, no me odies  
Please God, do not hate me  
¿Yo sé que esto es mal pero que hago?  
I know this is bad but what do I do?  
No mas no quiero ir al infierno  
I just don't want to go to hell Ayúdame por favor  
Amen.

Let's go back to the times where  
My mother's cooking  
The most comida Oaxaqueña you will ever find here in Seattle Every time my tongue touches her mole verde, my  
taste buds go dancing with fire  
Dancing in a way I never could during the fiestas de mi familia, thus proving yo si soy Mexicana  
Every time my hands met the hot rough sides of the tortillas,  
My hands would dance to cool the pride my Mexican mothers, father, sisters, brothers  
So that the Americans don't think we are invaders  
Let's go back to the times where my mother and father would ask  
"Are you ashamed of us? Is that why you don't bring your friends home?"  
"Of course, not mama, papa. I love being Mexicana"  
But, how could I love being Mexican when  
Every time I would get excited about hanging out with my friends I was looking forward to going to their house  
Filled with their un ending Americanness of the red, white, blue  
Their greasy burgers and their greasy fries  
Their overload of sugary brownies, their gooey chocolate chips  
How could I love being Mexican when I never wanted to show  
The twists and turns, the dips and rises that is la salsa verde, el guisado de res, la  
tlayuda, las memelas, los chapulines



I never wanted to show the green, white, red bold colors that are a symbol of my outsider self  
I never wanted questions of "Do you have papers? Are you an illegal? How did you get here?"

Let's go back to the times

Where I would deny any attraction to a girl and added "no homo" at the end of every sentence

That was a compliment to a girl, even if I just thought she was pretty

Let's go back to the times where

When asked "Are you a lesbian?"

I said "Hell no! I'm as straight as a pencil"

Yet deep down, I knew I was fucked

Deep down my heart knew I could not ignore admiring the beauty of women as much as I did with men

Scratch that, I cannot help but admire the beauty of everyone who is beautiful

Still, I let my parents speak to me about my future husband

I let my cousins and uncles and aunties ask "¿y el novio?"

Because I did not want to be known as la maricona I did not want to add the list of stereotypes that I get from

Americans and have to deal with stereotypes from Mexicans

I do not want questions of "but why choose this? How are you going to carry on the family like this?"

Let's go back to the times where I asked myself:

How could I possibly be proud? When my shoulders rose up and head went down at calling myself Mexicana

How could I possibly be proud?

When the thought of loving more than men made me drown in shame and disgust

How could I possibly be proud?

When it was easier to hurt myself

To cover up

How could I proudly show my true colors?

When 1 percent of my words are me and the 99 percent are explanations of why I am me

Let us come to now

Where being queer and being Mexican does not make me erase the colors of my rainbow

Where being Mexican and American does not make me cross the border an infinite amount of times a day

Where I am as beautiful as a migration butterfly and not looked at as the fly that bothers your shit

Where my love is infinite and your hate is not

Where I can ink my body with the roots of my strong and powerful Mexicanos y Mexicanas

and not get mocked by my people for being a maricona

Let us come to now

Adonde mi lengua es un ejemplo de las muchas cosas de mi que es mi orgullo

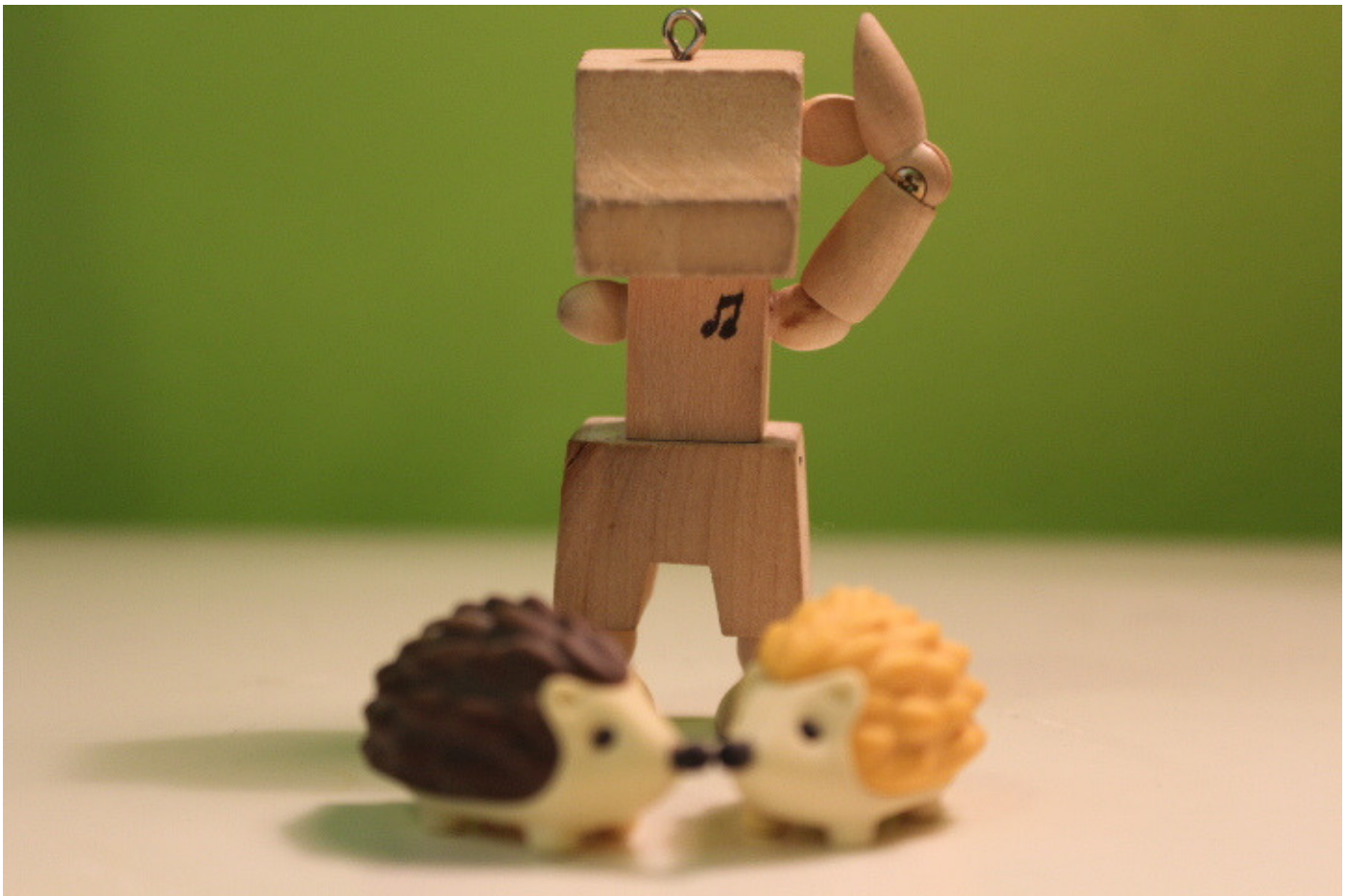
Where pride parade is another one of my many homes that my family knows about

Let us come to now

Where 99 percent of my words are me and 1 percent is still me



**Photograph by:**  
**Ximena Perez Rivero**  
**Age: 17**  
**(she/her)**





# **Mandolin Nguyen (she/her)**

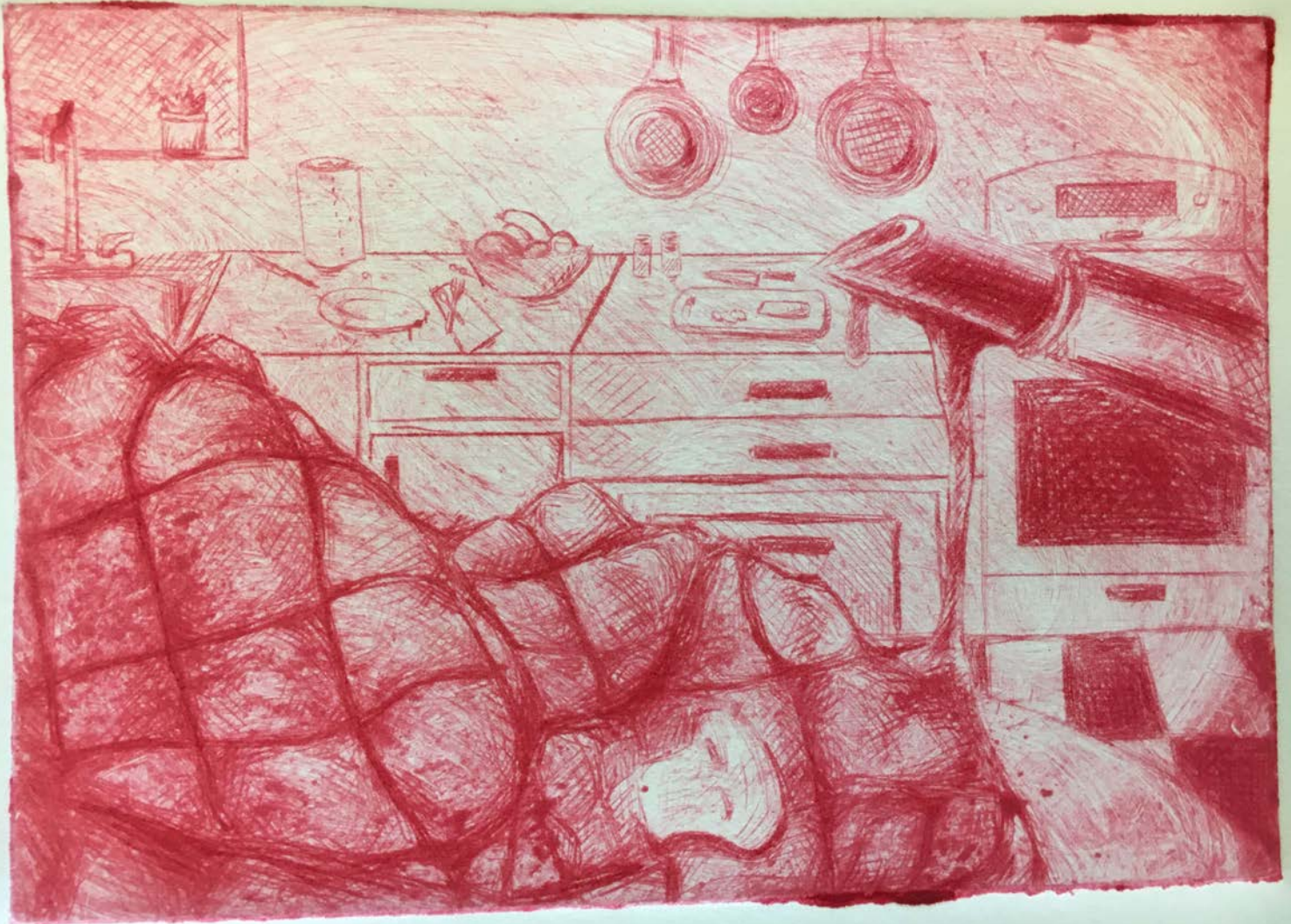


**Age: 16**

**Clay and glaze**



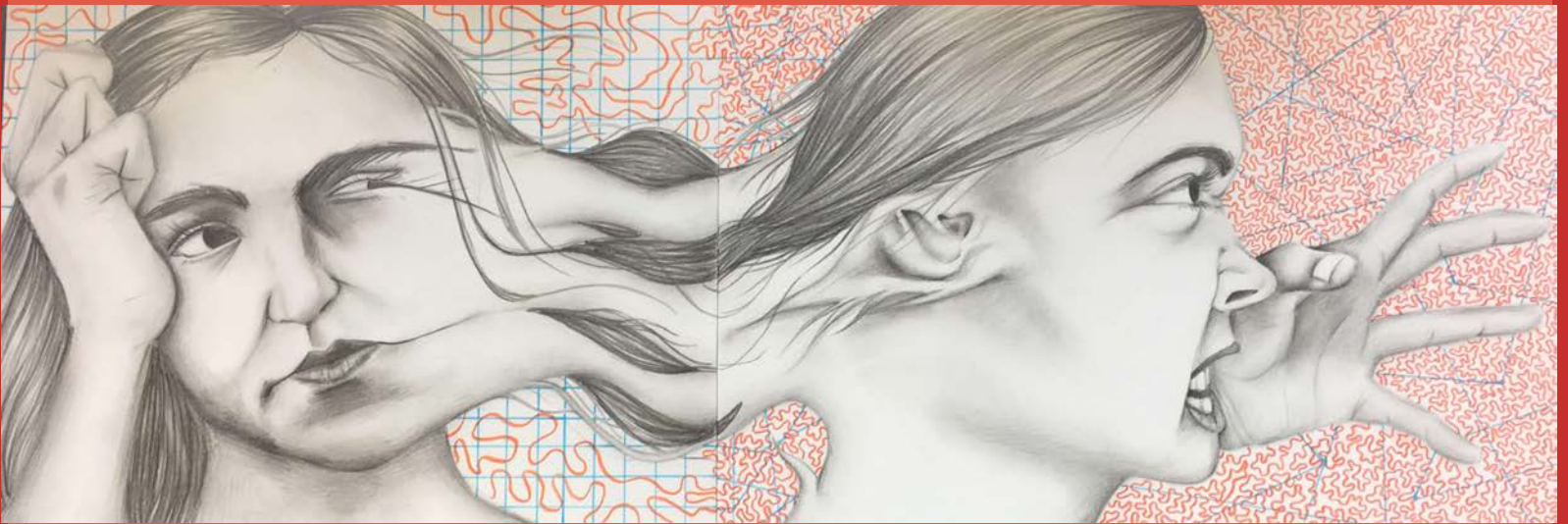
**Mabel Baumgardner**  
**(they/them)**  
**Age:18**



**Drypoint etch**



**Mabel Baumgardner**  
**(they/them)**  
**Age:18**



**Colored Pencil**  
**and Graphite**



# Jayla Fashaw

**(She/her) Age:16**

## Cake Design





# **Mabel Baumgardner** **(they/them)**

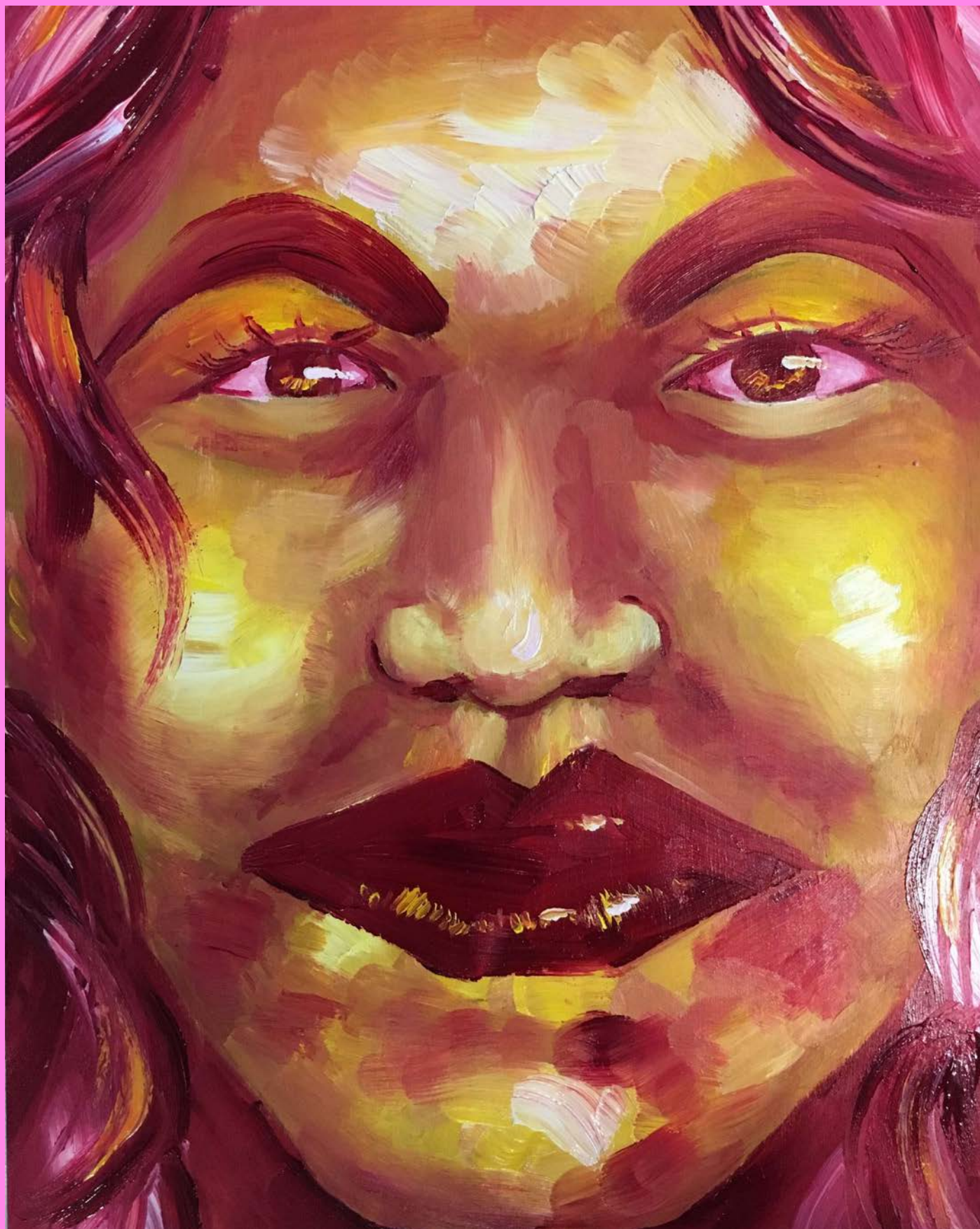
**Age:18**



**Colored Pencil**



**Mabel Baumgardner**  
**(they/them)**  
**Age:18**





# **Would you like to be featured in We Strut?**

For female or gender queer artists of color:

*We Strut* magazine is looking for artwork (any medium), poetry, or short narratives from you. This does not have to be brand new work either, we just really want your work to show.

Ideas you could cover in your writing or art: **beauty, fashion, self care, mental health, spirituality and/or religion, hair routines, experiences with racism, sexism, homophobia, DIY stuff, a short personal narrative of your choosing,**

Or whatever else you are passionate about! This magazine is meant to be a space for women of color to support and honor each other.

Submit your work to [westrutmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:westrutmagazine@gmail.com) with your name, age and pronouns.



