

## Leilani Reyes Artist Statement

*Protectors* is an ode to the classic sacred heart, frequently seen in Mexican folk art and the art of my Southern California community. It is a symbol of love and peace, and in my adaptation of it, I surrounded a heart with the small and beautiful creatures of the natural world. I have found a great sense of joy and love when in nature and when interacting with plants and animals, and so see them as an inextricable part of myself. This is an expression of that personal connection and of the link between human life and the life of all other plants and animals in the world around us.

*TropicalVision* is a dreamlike combination of the dangerous and beautiful aspects of nature. It can be lethal to protect itself, like a poisonous snake, or comforting with pink and orange leaves that draw your eye. In this case, the dangers stand out and are emphasized with a dagger, also providing a nod to classic tattoo art, and with eyes along the body of the snake to ward off threats. The diversity and adaptability of the Earth's creatures is something that is so fascinating to me, and so I channel that into my work with my own personal surreal and colorful spin.

### Artist Bio

Leilani Reyes is a self taught painter from Long Beach, California whose work depicts a saturated, rainbow-hued world where humans and nature are closely intertwined. She uses painting as a daily way of connecting to nature, with subject matter focusing on insects, fungi, animals, and plants. Her work is inspired by the intricate lives of the smallest creatures, and the cycles of life and transformation that we all go through.

She graduated from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles in 2019 with a degree in film production, and so works in a variety of creative formats including painting, writing, photography, and film. Though new to the gallery scene, she has had work featured at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles and participates in the Long Beach Art Walk, Patchwork Long Beach, and more local arts events to connect to the community and fellow artists.

To see more of her work visit her website at <https://lanireyes11.wixsite.com/leilanireyes>  
Instagram: @lei.rey