

Aviv Shimoni

Final Project ARTS108

Artist Statement

My final project, in essence, is a celebration of people and their identities. Using the premise of tarot cards as inspiration, my project seeks to reclaim the medium of tarot cards, which often exclusively portrays white figures, and reimagines cards from the deck as women and non-binary people of color. Participants were invited to choose from the major arcana cards, twenty-two of the most emblematic cards, and pick one they thought best represented themselves. The sitters were asked to wear clothing or bring items that have a personal or cultural significance to them to be used in the photograph. Deliberate angles, lighting, and scenes were used to aid in not only providing a visual and emotional experience for the viewers to connect with, but to also let the sitter tell their own story the way they wish it to be portrayed. The goal was not to exactly match the composition of a card, but rather to best convey its meaning through characteristics of the sitter's own life. As a whole, the audience is encouraged to empathize with the individual stories that photographs portray as well as the conversation that they have with one another, and to recognize that the platform of tarot cards can be a diverse and realistic celebration of human life and emotion, both the more joyful and the more difficult.

One example of a personal story brought to the project is Stephanie, "the sun's" tattoo on her finger is the Chinese word for "star," a symbol of her sister. She notes that her sister has a matching tattoo, which says "sun," a symbol for Stephanie, so they can always be together.