



This mural project for Pride Month hits close to home for me on so many levels. As a queer artist and a proud member of the LGBTQIA+ community, it's a chance to tell our story. I grew up right here in Clackamas County. Coming out to friends and family in 2016 was a turning point – it was where my self-discovery began, where I truly defined who I am. But not everyone has that privilege. There are people out there who lack a supportive network, and that's why Pride Month and this project are both so important.

Back when I came out, judgment towards the LGBTQIA+ community was intense. Aggression, slurs, and hate crimes were far too common. Thankfully, Pride has helped our community grow stronger over the years. It's given so many people the freedom to express themselves authentically. This mural would be a way for me to give back, to showcase LGBTQIA+ pride, and hopefully, to amplify our voices. It's a chance to celebrate who we are and create a more inclusive space for everyone.

For this Pride Month mural, I wanted to create a visual language that celebrates the essence of the LGBTQIA+ community: love, understanding, compassion, and connection. With a folk art aesthetic, I incorporated subtle nods to Pride. The color palette echoes the rainbow flag without being overly literal. My illustrations symbolize growth, transformation, love, happiness, and the connections that bind us together. I also weaved in specific flowers and fauna with a rich history of representing same-sex love – the pansy, the violet, and the green carnation – adding a layer of symbolism for those in the know. To ensure the mural is truly inclusive, I've also portrayed the figures with a degree of androgyny. This allows everyone, regardless of gender identity, to see themselves reflected in the artwork and feel a sense of belonging.

This mural project feels like a homecoming for me. It allows me to express my journey as a queer artist and celebrate the community that raised me. Hopefully, it will inspire others to find their own voice and create a world where everyone feels the freedom to be themselves.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make artwork for both my hometown and the LGBTQIA+ community, and Happy (almost) Pride Month!

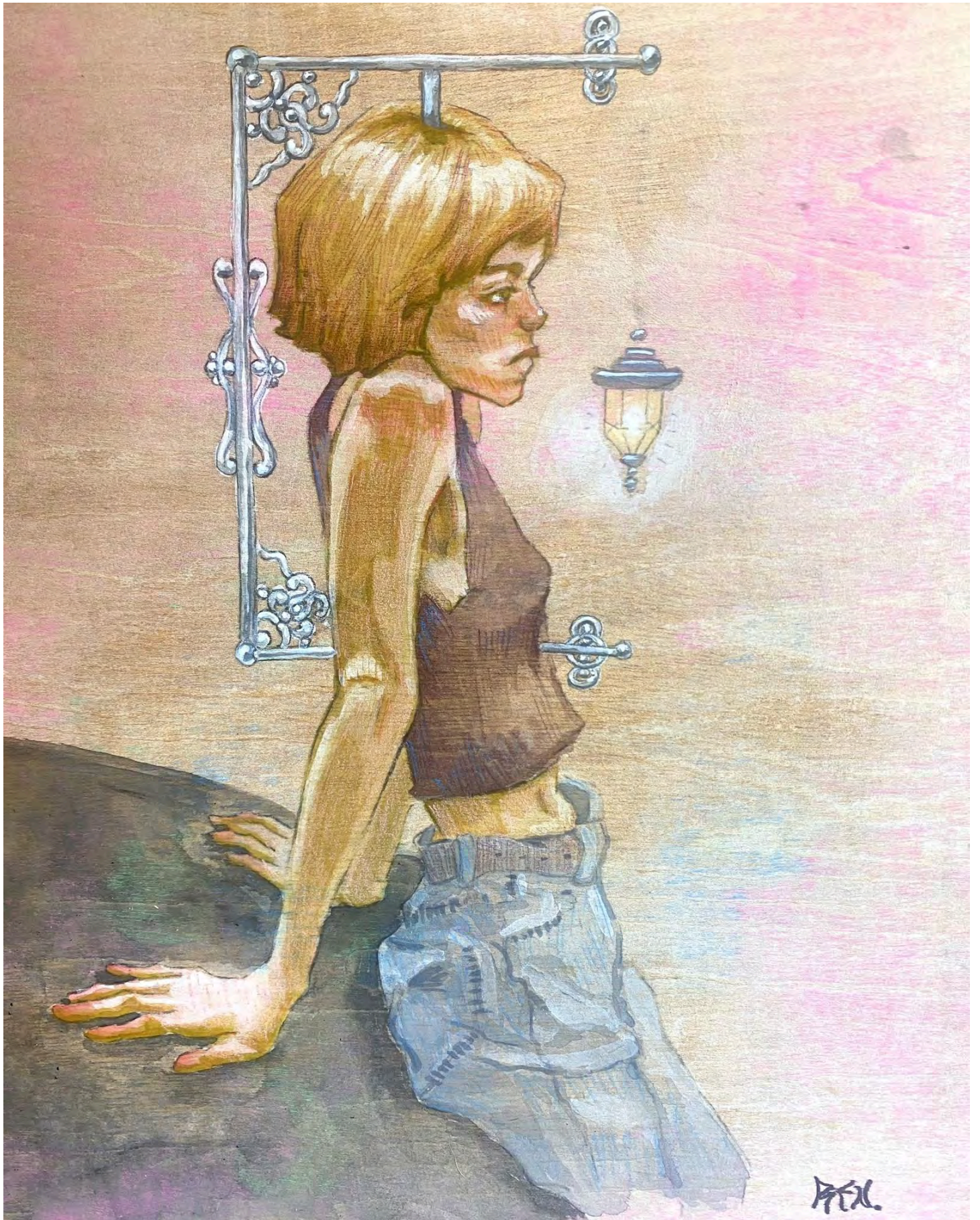
- Ren Kyles

## Previous Work









# Design









LOVE IS LOVE  
LOVE IS LOVE

