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Cosmic Visions: The Science of Astronomy and the Arts. From the very beginning of this class the interconnectedness of art and astronomy is emphasized. Both fields attempt to understand and give meaning to the universe, they use different tools and methods to accomplish that. Artists use more imagination and creative skills to express this while scientists use data and theorize about different possibilities. At the core of both practices is them trying to make sense of a somewhat incomprehensible universe. When creating my art project, I wanted to show the intersection of both science and art in a simple way. That is how my artwork, an astronaut painting a piece of art focused on the cosmos, came to be, a piece that hopefully shows that both exploration and creativity can coexist.

My artwork is a hand-drawn piece made with colored pencils and watercolor, depicting an astronaut painting a planet and stars on a canvas. The astronaut and canvas are at the center of the piece with empty space around them, so it gives the impression that the astronaut is almost floating in this emptiness of space. Originally I was going to add some sort of more detailed background after drawing everything out, but I decided against it because I liked how the empty space emphasized the astronaut. I used purple and pink as my background colors because I felt like they felt like outer space colors to me and I didn't want to use black. I didn't want the background to look too harsh which is why I used watercolor for it. Because I wanted the astronaut and the painting to stand out, I used colored pencil for that part to give it a sharper, defined feel. I wanted specific aspects to stick out like the paint pallet and details on the back of the astronaut so using colored pencils was an easy way to make those precise and stand out. The combination of the more precise colored pencils and more fluid watercolor paint is like science and art, one more measured and precise while the other is more interpretive and fluid.

When many people think of astronauts, including me, they think of very scientific, research focused people doing experiments in space, whether it be in the space station, on the moon, or when they've returned to Earth. They're focused on their task and there's little room for error. I wanted this drawing to show the imaginative and curious side of astronauts. They are up in space exploring, not just looking through a telescope on earth, studying the universe. Exploring can be and is creative, we all come up with ideas and theories, expressing them differently, maybe through your personal field of interest such as biology, astronomy, chemistry, botany, etc. Even if we aren't a professional in a field like that we still have ideas and guesses as to what is happening throughout the universe, and I wanted the astronaut to capture that feeling that all humans have off curiosity for what's out there.

It's human nature to want to leave a mark on the world, however they can. Space is overwhelming and incomprehensible, but we still want to explore it and understand it. Even though astronauts are some of the most daring humans they still share the human spirit of curiosity that has been with us forever. By giving the astronaut artistic abilities, it shows that exploration isn't just a physical, tangible thing, it's also expressive and creative. Exploring isn't just about observing, it's about interpreting and imagining our place within the universe.

Creating this artwork after taking this class only reaffirmed my learning that astronomy and art are intertwined and support the other. My goal was to communicate the feeling of being inspired by the cosmos and wanting to express it in some way, whether it be through a more scientific lens, an artistic lens, or both. Hopefully this piece represents the intersection between imagination and observation and how creativity is essential to explore and to learn new things.

