“Medieval Darkness”

by Jade D’Errico

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My senior project is a series of paintings and prints with. The common themes of these pieces are dark fantasy, medieval, and mythical imagery. I used many different mediums and methods to create this series –; oil paint, copper plate intaglio (hard ground and aquatint) with, chine colle, copper plates, linoleum, and monoprint. A huge inspiration for of mine regarding my art is video games and manga. The character designs and the worlds they live in within these video games and manga are so interesting to nme, and I enjoy creating my own art while using these as inspiration. The subject of war is also important to my art, since there are so many weapons, knights, and combat shown in it consistently. I include a lot of mythical creatures and an array of different armor pieces in my work. There is a large variety of weapons. Also, knights are common in my work because their different styles of armor interest me. They add to the medieval atmosphere present. I will go into depth about the meanings and stories behind my pieces, picking apart every detail and the intentions behind them.

This print, "Joan of Arc" is a copper plate etching on 22x30 paper. I used aquatint and hard ground to etch the plate. The figure on the rearing horse represents Joan of Arc, a national heroine of France. She wields a short sword, raising it in the air as she pulls on the reins of her horse. Her armor is intricate and her cape is white and flowing with the action. She has a spur on her boot, a wing on her helmet, and a star and shamrock on her chestplate. Her horse is also well decorated with metal embellishments and armor, including a horn, face plate, neck armor, and a white banner to match the knight's white cape. The horse's eye glows white, making it appear godly or supernatural. The background is a gradient from light gray on top to dark gray on the bottom. Joan was a determined warrior, with little to no fear during war. "Still Joan wanted to fight on, remembering the victory at Orleans which had been won late in the day, after she was wounded, when she rallied the troops… In any case, Joan was an angry woman by the end of the attack on Paris." **(Taylor, 100-101)** Joan was a passionate saint of France; nothing got in her way and she would fight through. She would hear voices that started when she was thirteen years old, telling her to complete a mission to save France. She said the voices had been sent by God, guiding her to her destiny.

The video game I am inspired by is called Diablo. It is a game I have been playing since I was seven years old. There are four Diablo games available, the first one released in 1997, second one released in 2000, third one released in 2012, and the fourth one released recently in 2023. The plot of the game is that you are a warrior that starts off fighting for your town and later on as the game progresses you come across more supernatural creatures like werewolves, goat men, dragons, monsters, and zombies. You eventually travel enough until you reach hell at the end of the game, where your mission is to kill Diablo, which represents the devil. Once you kill diablo, you complete the game and save the world. I am heavily inspired by this storyline. Additionally, the art, character design, and monster design intrigued me. The design of the levels are all so different. There are levels that take place in a huge open desert, a deep rainforest with giant snakes and insects, a river of flame with demons wandering around it, a jail crawling with skeletons and ghosts, the high heavens fighting along angels in a war against demons, caves infested with maggots and human-sized spiders, and snowy war zones with forts and catapults. The range of creativity of the levels in this game interest me, inspiring me to create art and my own images of them to show how much I appreciate their beauty and uniqueness.

Weapons are an important part of my subject matter. I include many types, from swords to polearms. Some types of swords I like to draw are claymores, falchions, zweihänders, bastard swords, straight swords, curved swords, rapiers, and flamberges. Other weapons that interest me are scythes,

spears, lances, axes, poleaxes, bows, crossbows, bardiches, and halberds. I like to depict weapons in my pieces because not only are they beautiful to look at, but they can symbolize skill, strength, and power. They bring more meaning to the characters wielding them in my art, acting as a symbol or an embellishment to the piece. The type of weapon that one wields can describe their personality or character. Characters can use weapons for different reasons. Some are aiming to use them for strictly violence and to release the anger inside of them. It can be their key to getting revenge on an enemy. Others have weapons to use as a form of protection from evil. They can come across hostile creatures and be prepared for a fight. Some characters have weapons as a symbol of honor and valor, like knights and warriors. They fight for their people and earn respect for it. I enjoy drawing weapons because of their usually uniform appearance – they are designed and built to perfection and the formality interests me. The sharpness of the blades and shine of the metal is beautiful to look at. I like including weapons also as a sort of decoration to the piece. Not all weapons are drawn as perfect, some are broken and worn down as a result of a war or fight. That can also add to the stories behind the weapon depicted in a piece.

This piece, "Cerberus" is a linocut print, and a triptych. The three dog heads are positioned with two on the bottom and one on top, all facing away from each other. The dogs are joined into one three-headed creature. It represents Cerberus, a multi-headed dog in Greek mythology that guards the gates of the Underworld, devouring anyone who tries to escape. "A three-headed or, some say, fifty-headed dog named Cerberus, guards the opposite shore of Styx, ready to devour living intruders or ghostly fugitives." **(Graves, 120)** Cerberus's job is also to keep mortals, or the living, out of the underworld. The name Cerberus comes from the Greek word "creoboros", which means "flesh-devouring", symbolizing his will to eat anyone who tries escaping the underworld. Cerberus is usually depicted as three-headed, but sometimes his design varies. He can be described as a dog with fifty to even one hundred heads. Some descriptions include him having a snake for a tail, or snake heads along his back. This mythical creature interests me most because of his design, I believe it is unique and intriguing figure to make art and narratives from, and the fact there are multiple versions of his design is also very interesting.

Creatures in Greek mythology appear a lot in my work. I enjoy drawing them, making prints of them, and painting them. The variety of the designs of all of them are so drastically different. The idea of the combination of different animals into one creature interests me most, since there are so many combinations to create. For example, a human combined with a horse is a centaur, a goat combined with a human is a satyr, and a chimera, which is a lion with a goat head and a snake for a tail. Their purposes and stories in Greek mythology interest me, and I enjoy including them in my narrative pieces. I use their symbolism in Greek mythology to create more meanings into my work, telling a deeper story. The way these tales change and people alter the stories in their own creative ways to tell different stories is so interesting to me, and I enjoy the wide variety of ideas in Greek mythology.

I aim to use these pieces of art to tell stories and create a whole different world in them to show. I also enjoy the variety of artistic methods and mediums I used, I was able to branch out and try different things to make new work. I find the idea of telling stories through imagery intriguing since there can be many different interpretations depending on the viewer. Many different viewers think of different ideas about my work, processing a different story in their minds just from looking at it. Sometimes viewers think of a different story than I originally intended it to tell, and I enjoy that creativity this can lead to.

“Untitled”, oil on masonite

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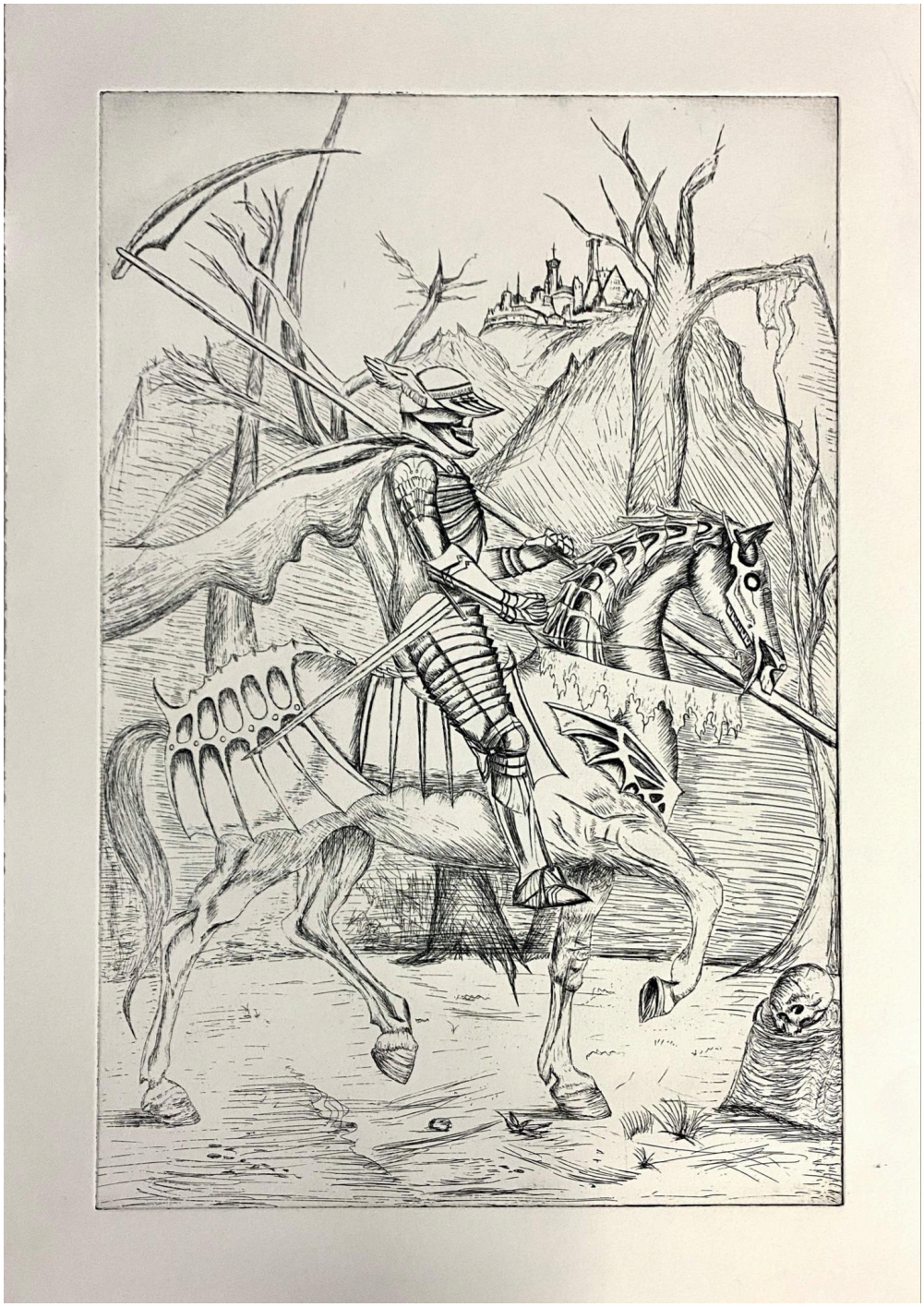
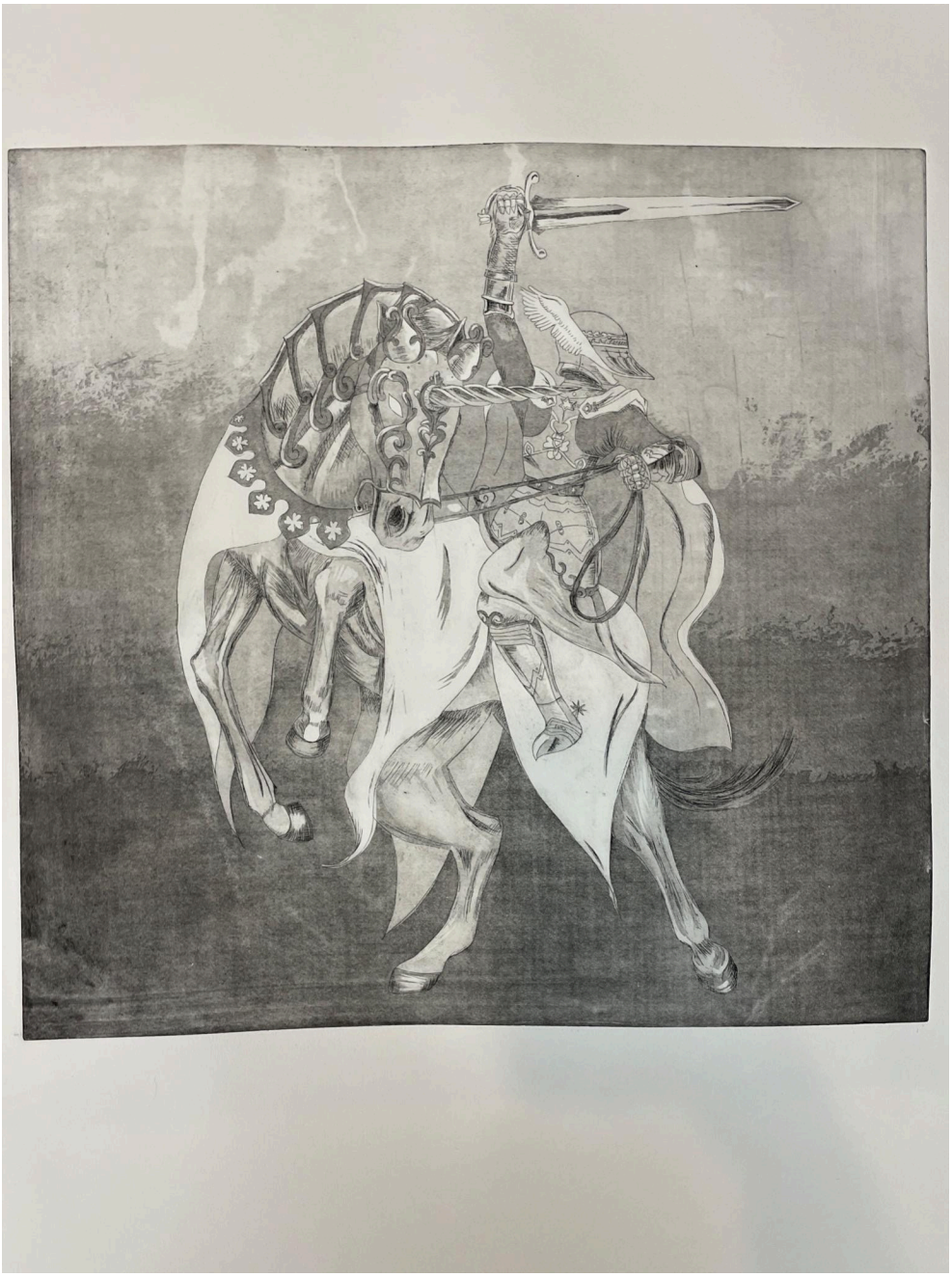
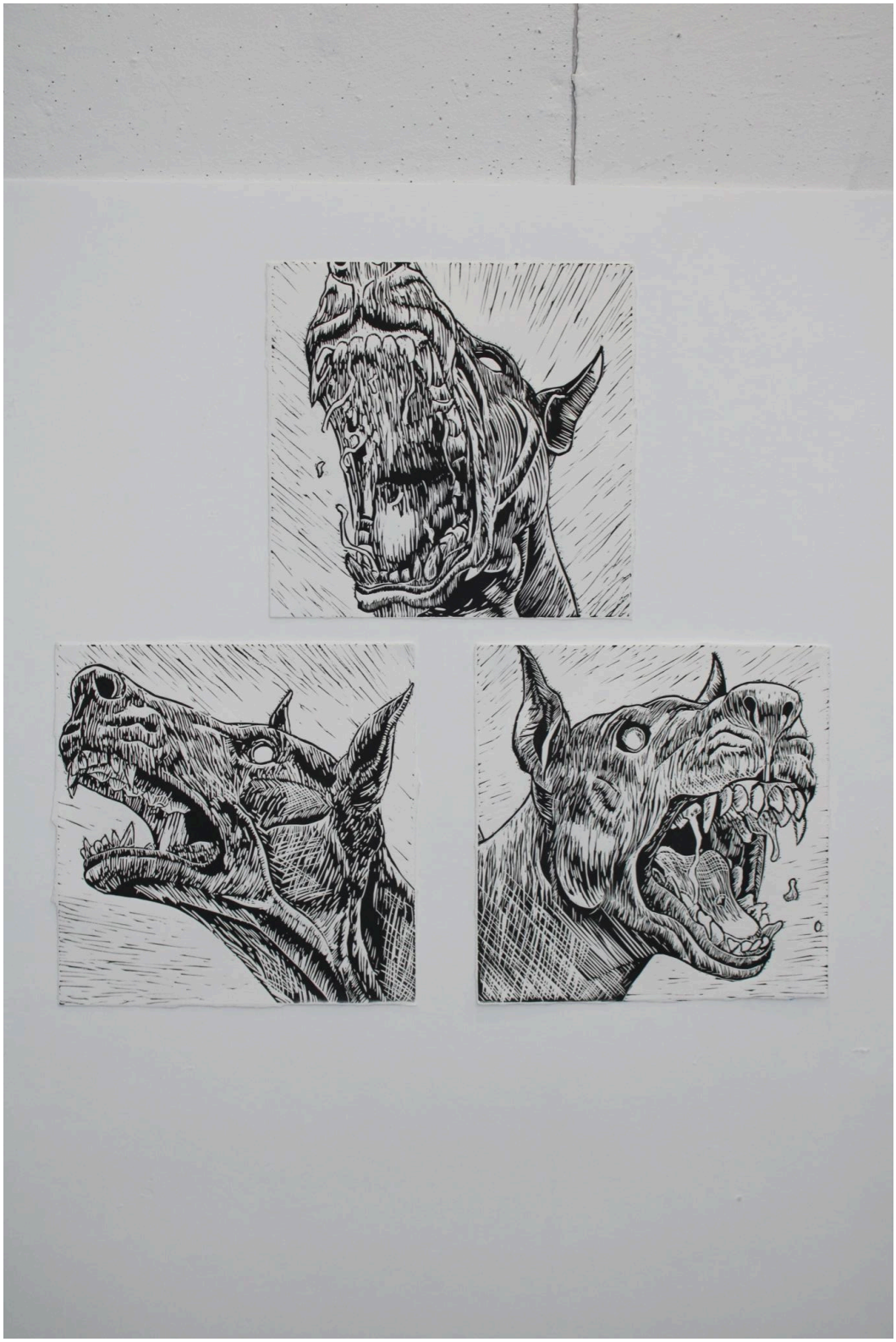


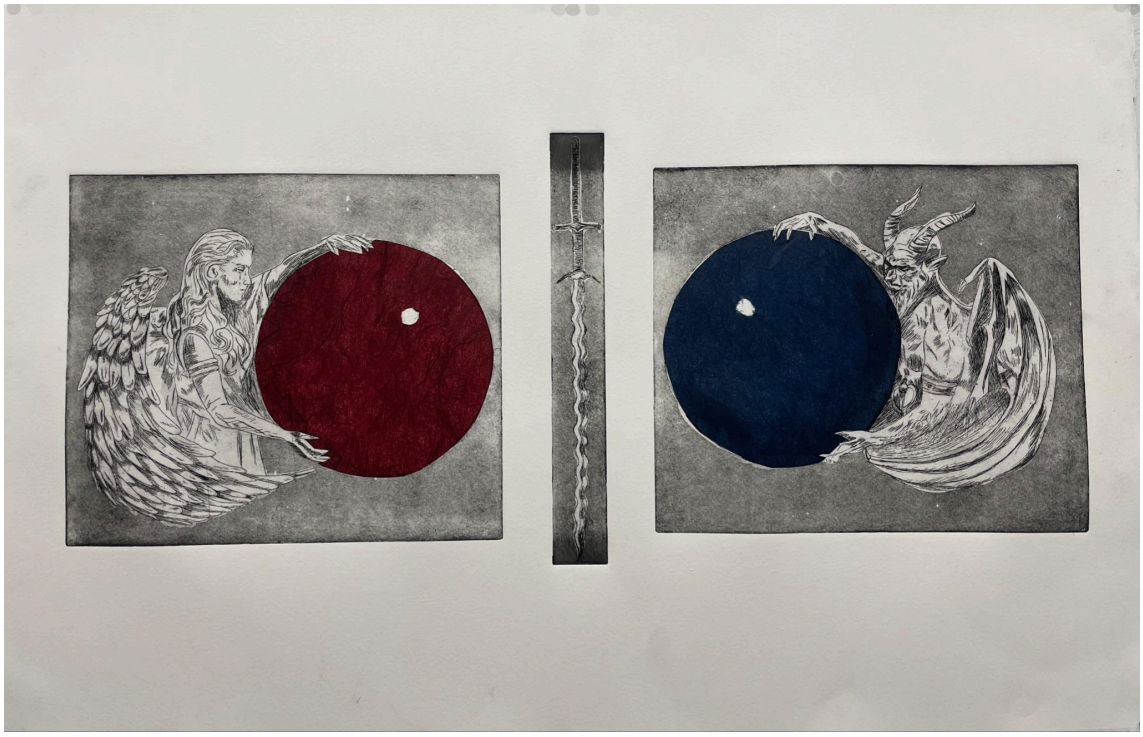
“Untitled”, copper plate etching



“Joan of Arc”, copper plate etching



“Cerberus”, Linocut



“Diablo”, Copper plate etching, chine colle

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