

## Artist Statement

My name is Jadakess Neal and I am a Illinois native, art administration major from Streamwood IL. Currently attending Northern Illinois University and specializing in naturalism and abstract paintings. The many downfalls and triumphs I experienced over the past four years have allowed me to become successful in my academics and prepared me for the journey that I am about to embark on. I took up leadership positions to attain new skills, enhance my knowledge and to become ahead of the game. I was inspired to join study groups, to schedule my study time more effectively, and to try new things. As I began to do these things, I started to see the growth within my grades and I no longer felt overwhelmed. The tone had been set and as a visual learner I was able to reflect upon my past and I applied myself. I realized my lack of confidence within myself and being concerned with what others thought about me. I realized this was a barrier and it was holding me back from attaining academic success. I began to determine what traits or characteristics influence my everyday decisions. I became involved in extracurricular activities to allow myself to grow through this role and improve in my studies. Speaking out and expressing my own and worldly emotions through art was not only a passion but a talent of mine that I had learned to use as a strength in validating my knowledge of what was going on around me.