

Taste the Gradience

Anika Tahsin

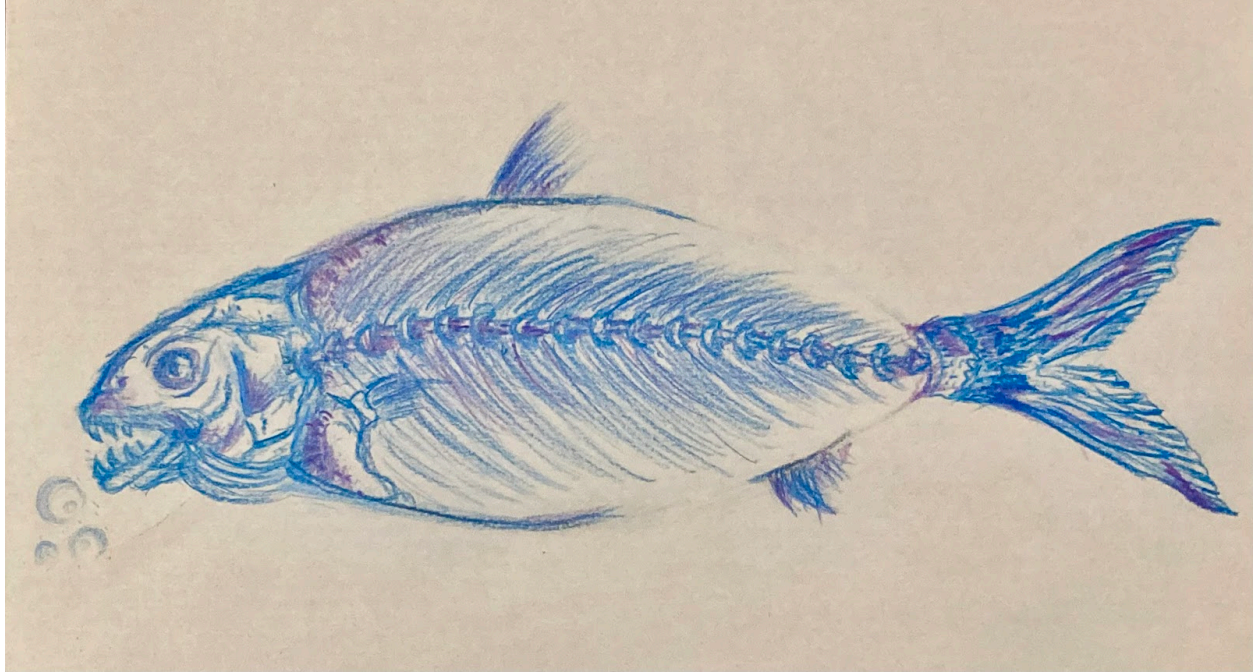


The first piece, **Pizza with a Sprinkle of Inflation**. This was made using an 8 in x 11 in white paper, coloring pencils, crayons, oil, and saran wrap. I first made a sketch of the pizza, then the plate, and the dollar sign shaker. New York is known for their pizza, and it used to be very accessible to students (\$1 before Covid-19), however, prices have increased due to inflation(now around \$3.50+), which is what the dollar signs symbolize. I began adding color to the crust, using crayons for texture purposes. Then, I started coloring the actual pizza, starting with a red coloring pencil, then using a (crayon) darker version of the red by the crust and other areas of the pizza, then went in with different shades of yellow and orange. At first, the colors

were not blending in properly, so I tried using my finger to blend it in, which barely worked. And, I was still missing the grease element of the pizza. Then, I remembered a technique that was taught in my high school art class for blending, which involved oil and a Qtip. It was going well in the beginning, then started bleeding through the paper and looked like mold on the pizza. Then, I got the thought of using saran wrap for the grease-like visual effect. I would definitely say that the meaning of this artwork was modified during the process. This work now represents the hype of pizzas dying out because New York is extremely diverse, so people (current residents and tourists) go for other options, besides the inflated pizza.



The second piece, **Melodic Ice Cream**. The memories associated with this piece symbolize my childhood and path of commuting. From elementary school to high school, I have always heard the jingle and chimes song coming from Mister Softee's ice cream truck every summer and spring. So, the musical notes wrapped around the ice cream are one of the biggest indicators of the brand and its catchy marketing tactic. This work was made using a 8 in x 11 in white paper, markers, and a pencil. My usual was always a vanilla cone and I have chosen to do this piece in a pop art style, inspired by Andy Warhol's "Campbell's Soup Cans". I had initially chosen to use markers for this piece to convey the texture of ice cream in one's mouth, which is usually smooth. I sketched the ice cream and cone with a pencil, then went in with the markers. The pencil marks left on the center of the art piece was intentional as I wanted to show that this ice cream grew alongside me. It used to be priced at \$2.50 when I was in school, but has increased to \$3.00 in recent years. Nevertheless, I would always look out the window to spot a Mister Softee ice cream truck whenever I hear the nostalgic melody.



The third piece, **Nostalgic Fish**. This is a skeletal anatomy of the Hilsa or Ilish (in Bangla), a Bangladeshi delicacy. My family usually makes curry (a mustard seed base on holidays and a red curry base for normal days) out of Ilish on special occasions. This work was made using an 8 in x 11 in white paper, a blue, and violet coloring pencil. I have made this piece based on my views of the real life fish and my experience with the bones. To make it less monochromatic, I have used a violet coloring pencil. In the tail, spinal bones, and head, I use a stippling method. The addition of these dots adds depth by taking away from the repetitive pencil strokes. I have chosen to do a skeletal version of the Ilish to express my once annoyance shifting into appreciation. Growing up, I felt forced to eat this fish on many occasions and I dreaded every bit of it due to the fact that it was tedious and contained multiple fish bones in every bite. Now, I appreciate my parents buying this fish and making curry out of it on rare occasions, hence the color blue, which, in fact, is also my favorite. The biggest takeaway for me is realizing that there is beauty in complicated things, which I learned by being patient as I took out every fish bone before enjoying the Ilish.



This last piece was created in class and at home. The **Surrealist Collage** involved many cutouts from holiday and travel magazines, a lot of layering, and gluing. I had the bottom half of the background completed before I started adding smaller cutouts to make the space less empty. I initially wanted to make the boat the center piece, yet it was missing something, so I put Groot in a dress with an ice cream cone on his head. The floating oranges with leaves symbolize birds, and the big orange is the sun. I glued on the simpson characters and the animals because I found their expressions comical, and I added scissors (which represents wings) on the llama. When looking at the previous works of art in this collection, I noticed that parts of them are in this collage as well, which is shocking because this piece was created more than a month ago. The pie dress on Groot could be tied back to the pizza slice. The ice cream cone looks similar to the one in the **Melodic Ice Cream** piece, almost like the missing half of the cone. And, the bottom of the background is a blue sea, where **Nostalgic Fish** can be found. Overall, this work expresses the relationship of food with the consumer.