

## UNC Asheville sculpture student plays with ideas of love

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In a small studio tucked away in a remote corner of Carmichael Hall, three-dimensional hearts of all sizes decorate the walls. Every kind of heart is present: pierced hearts, hearts with mirrors inside them, twisted wire hearts, tiny heart-shaped honeycombs creating even larger heart displays, anatomical hearts and even a heart wearing panties. Shanna Glawson, a senior sculpture student from Forest City, investigates love.

"I'm actually going through a divorce," Glawson said. "So this process has been about exploring some of that, as well as the physical and emotional side and exploring more of my own self-love."

Glawson's senior thesis art project called "Eros, Agape and Other Heart Conditions," explores love and the shape of the heart. Glawson sculpts anatomical as well as symbolic depictions of the heart, occasionally blending the two.

"I actually was born with a heart condition called Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome," Glawson said. "That led me to have heart surgery when I was 21-years-old and since then I've kind of latched onto this heart shape."

Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome is a rare condition in which the heart has an extra electrical pathway, causing a rapid heartbeat. According to the Mayo Clinic, the condition is only

discovered by chance during a heart exam and is usually not life threatening.

"The symbol of the heart shape is pretty prominent in all religions," Glawson said. "It's a vessel for your soul, it's the place where you and God meet — inside your heart."

Glawson takes particular interest in the iconography of the heart shape. Many of her sculptures call to mind famous religious depictions, such as the burning heart of St. Augustine and Sufi depictions of winged hearts with singular eyes.

"With my sculptures I'm trying to figure out how I can manipulate this form and do different variations to the same shape in order to get different feelings and references of love," Glawson said. "I've explored into what the Greeks define as 'Eros,' which is our humanistic, sexual eroticness of the heart, as well as 'Agape,' which is more of a divine, spiritual love."

Glawson finds herself leaning more toward the spiritual side of love these days. When she mentally examines past relationships, she said she notes feelings of insecurity she mistook for love. Through these ponderings, her spiritual love becomes more of a process of discovering and experiencing self-love.

"Even through all these really crappy relationships, exploring the romantic side is kind of fun," Glawson said. "I've always been able to keep the hope intact. I

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# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Shanna Glawson works on her current sculpture exhibit

PHOTOS BY TIM HAYES