



## **To be Seen**

The original piece “To be seen” By me, Estrella Rivera, embodies the feeling of anxiety as a teenage girl. I utilized eyes as a symbol for society and its standard revolving around how teenage girls should look and behave. The pressure to reach society’s unattainable expectations evokes anxiety and mental health issues. It's estimated that 38% of girls struggled and or struggle with anxiety during their teenage years. The fruit bowl represents a teenage girl. I used the juxtaposition of new, fresh fruits, along with drier, almost rotting fruits, to represent the imperfections and differences that society points out about teenage girls. The fruit bowl is being looked at, judged by the eyes of society. The eyes have an envious stare that severs the fruit, making it hard for the fruit to shine. The bowl itself has a flora design often associated with Central American pottery, referring to my identity as a Salvadoran American. This judgmental culture is extremely prominent in Latino communities. As a Salvadoran American, I grew up with family members giving me nicknames based on my appearance. From a young age, I was exposed to insecurities I had no idea about. In most Hispanic families, when you're little and even as you grow older, a nickname is “assigned” to you. Typically, it's names like “gordita”(fatty), “flaquita” (skinny), “conejita” (buck-toothed). These nicknames start with love but can be very damaging to a developing child's self-image. I was given the name “flaquita,” which I used to think was very rewarding. This was up until I hit puberty and began to go through extreme body changes. My family would constantly point out my weight gain by saying things like “flakita” isn't so skinny anymore, she's all grown up now.” I constantly felt like eyes were on me, looking at every roll, every pound gained, and every new insecurity. I dealt with a lot of body dysmorphia and anxiety that still affects me to this day. Through my art, I hope to convey that our imperfections make us unique, not undeserving. Hopefully, one day, teenage girls won’t have to worry about the way the world perceives them.