

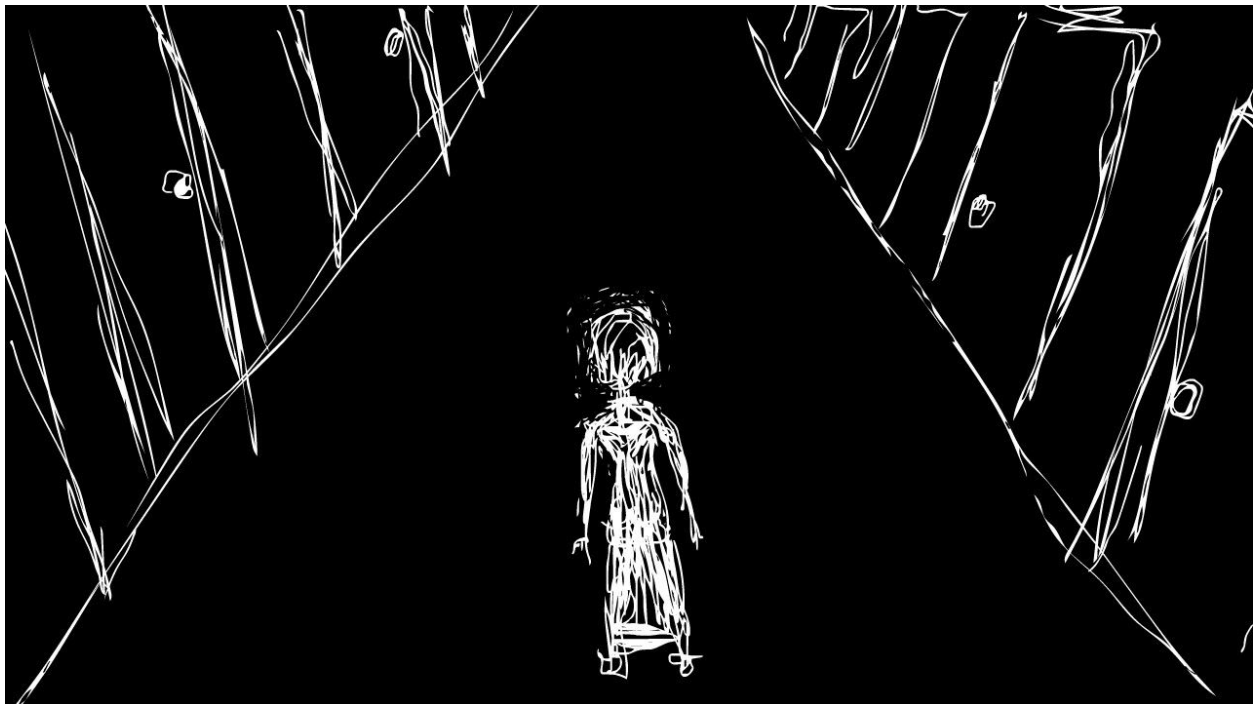
Ariel Akumanyi - *Phantasmagoria*

Ariel Akumanyi is a narrative storyteller, illustrator and animator. Her works focus on fantasy, mythology, and the human experience through the lens of the macabre. Ariel combines images with words to distort or imbue multiple layers of meaning. The more her audience can chew on, the better! Primarily working in black and white, color is sparsely used to either heighten emotion or emphasize thematic elements. Her recent experience with animation allows her to combine motion and sound to add a sense of grounded realism to otherwise fantastical scenarios. Ariel is currently working digitally. She aims to expand her work into installation in the future.

Phantasmagoria explores the relationship between the supernatural and mental health and tries to explain how interconnected these two topics are through the lens of my family's own brushes with the macabre. Incorporating animation with installation, I aim to chronicle the experiences my family members have had with otherworldly forces and their attempts at reconciling their encounters with reality. My family has had a connection to the supernatural since before I was born. My grandmother would perform seances and have secret gatherings with her friends in her family home in my mother's youth. My own mother has had her own encounters with the otherworldly through dreams and alleged ghost sightings. Jesus Christ himself appeared as clear as day in front of my cousin, pushing him towards religion. I've had other cousins who have heard voices and seen long-departed family members in their dreams or in front of their own eyes. Mental illness is something intertwined in my family's history, only exacerbated by family tragedies. Ghosts, demons and monsters let them make peace with the horrors of the real world. Racism, assault, and illness are distorted into monstrous figures. I aim to capture the feelings of uncertainty and alienation through the use of carefully timed animations that flash into the interior space. By creating a space that is hard to "read", I invite the viewer to put in the time to work out the meaning. Through careful observation, the viewer can slowly piece together the narrative and experience the inner workings of the mind. I want to use trickery to manipulate the viewer's perception of what they see, much like how ghost stories and folklore have a lingering hold on the collective psyches of people.



Description: An image from the short animation 'Phantasmagoria', centered around a young girl's journey through her own distorted memories.



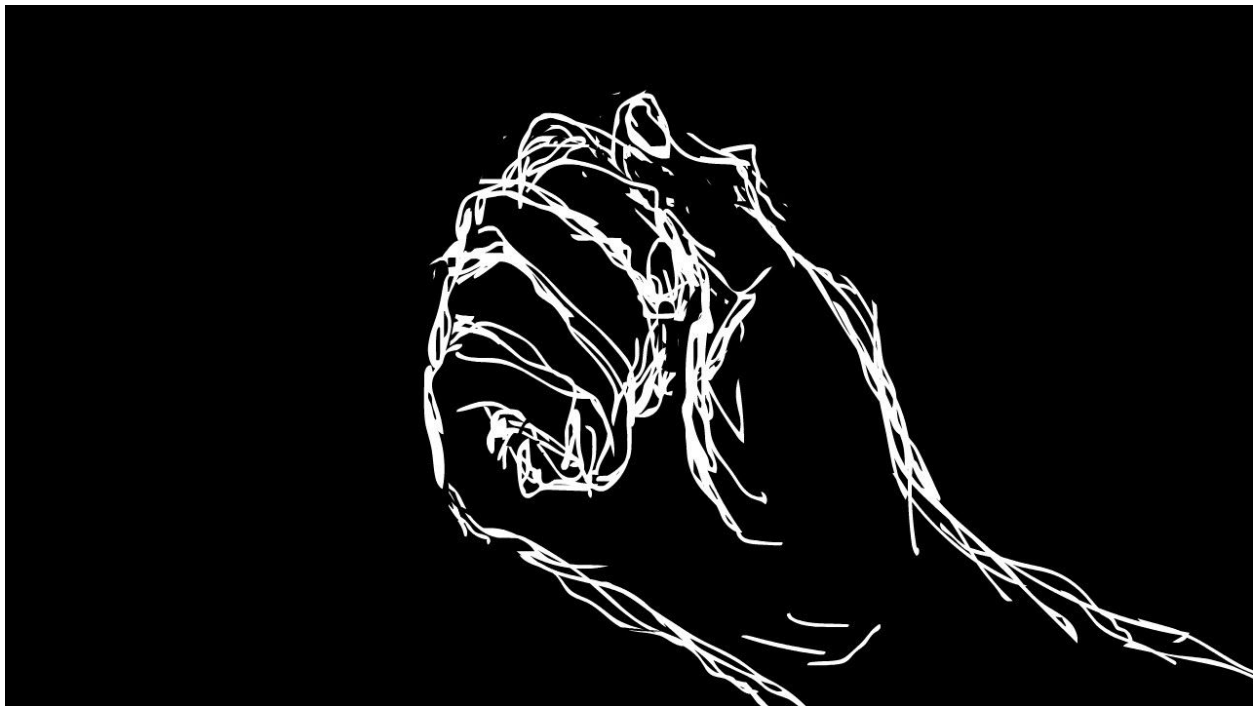
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