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# Lighting the way for a shared future

An exploration through artworks

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# Art Critics

The artworks on the next 6 slides have all been entries by secondary students to NATRE's Spirited Arts competition over the last 5 years.

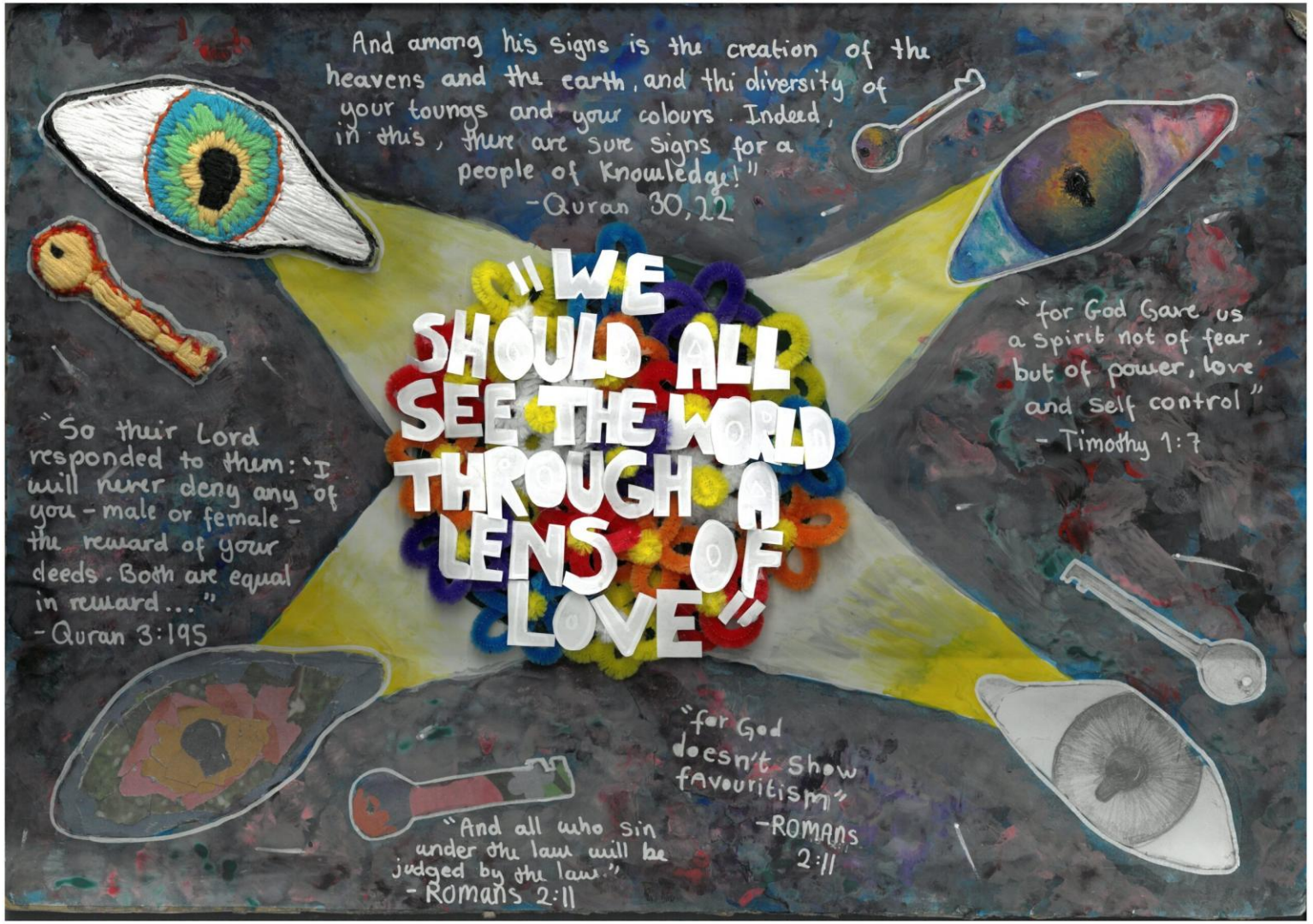
Look through them. For each, ask yourself:

Where does my eye look first, and what makes me want to keep on looking?

How well did the artist use their tools, colours and/or materials?

Do I think this artwork links well to the theme 'lighting the way for a shared future?'

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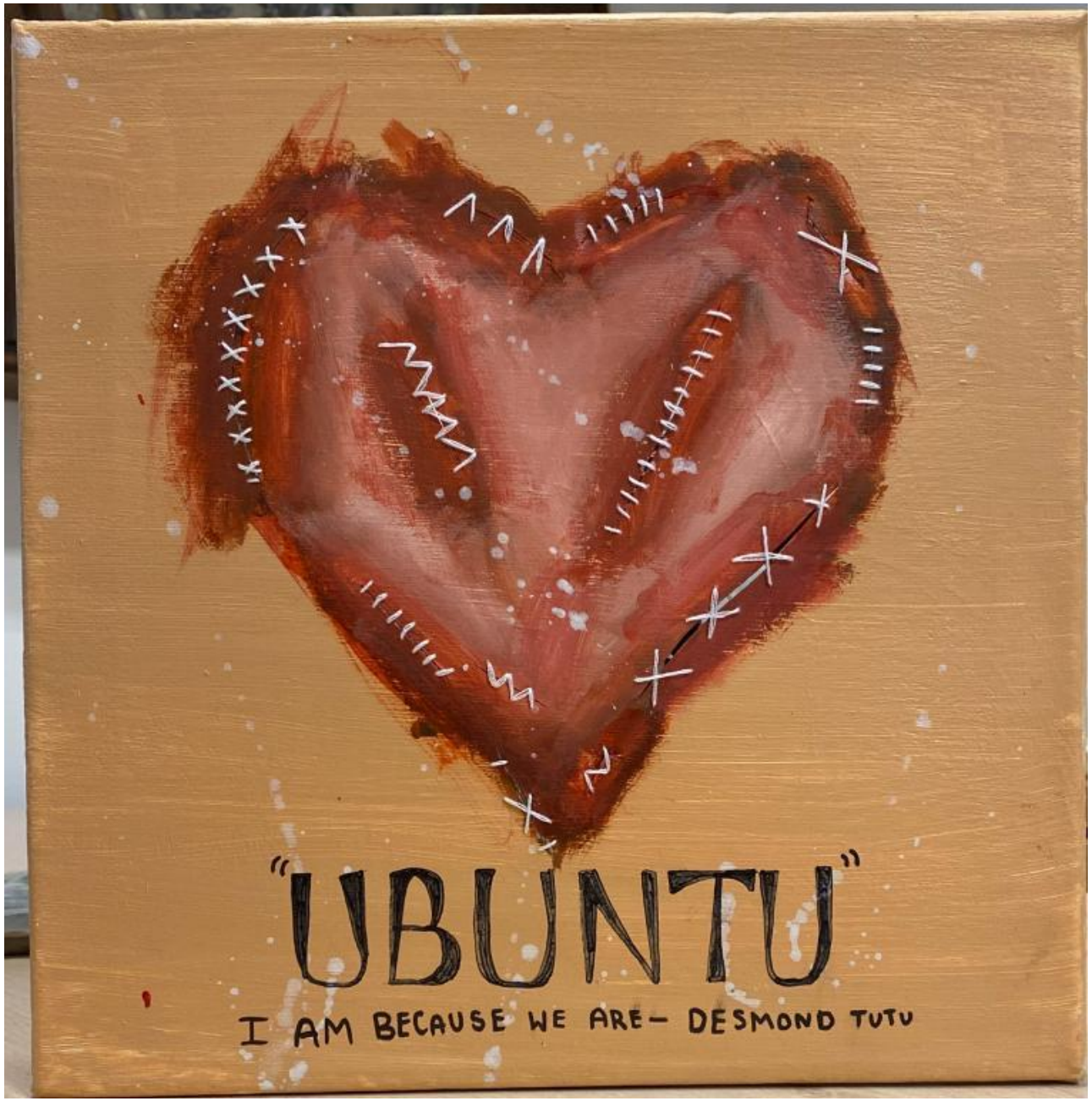
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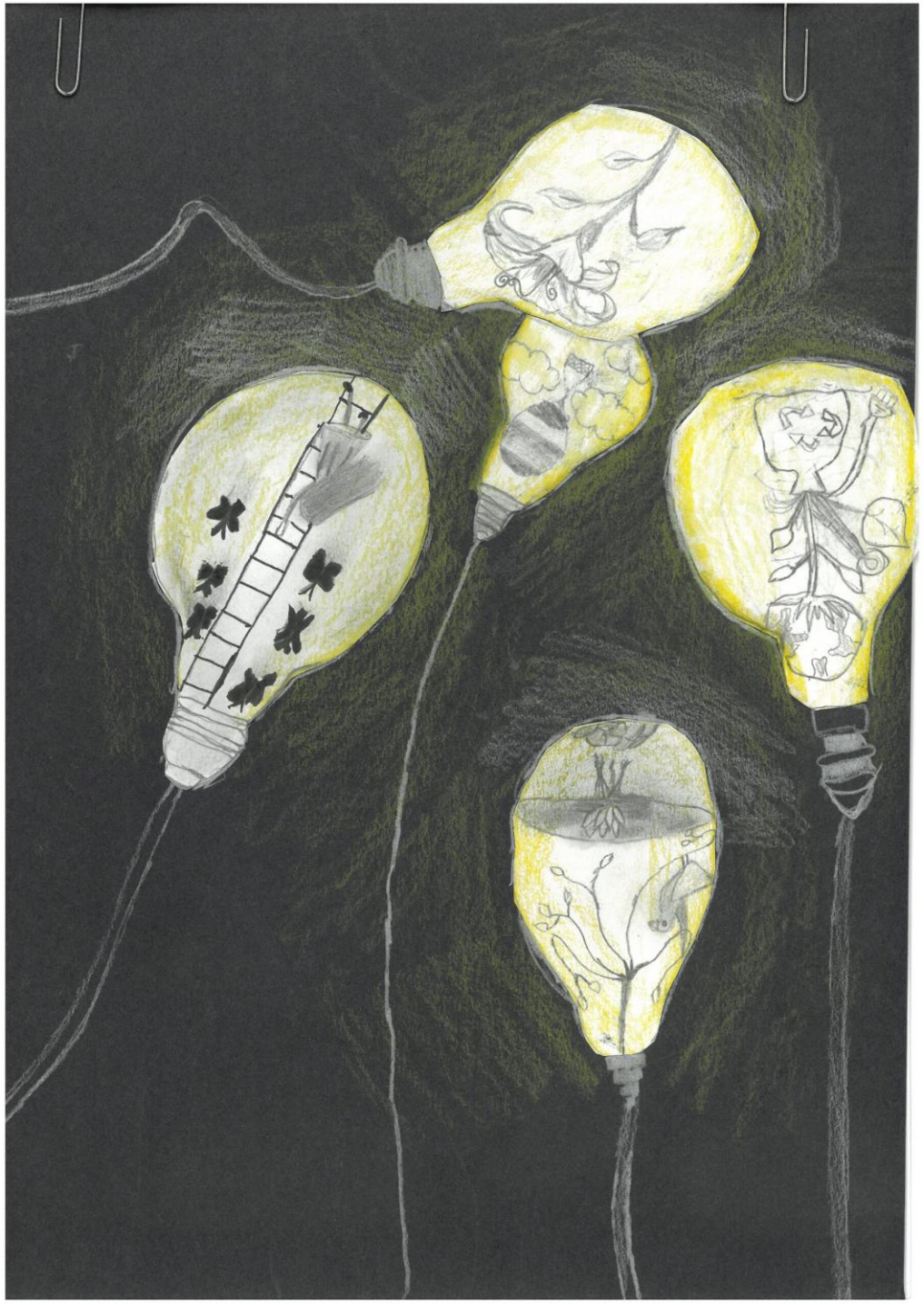
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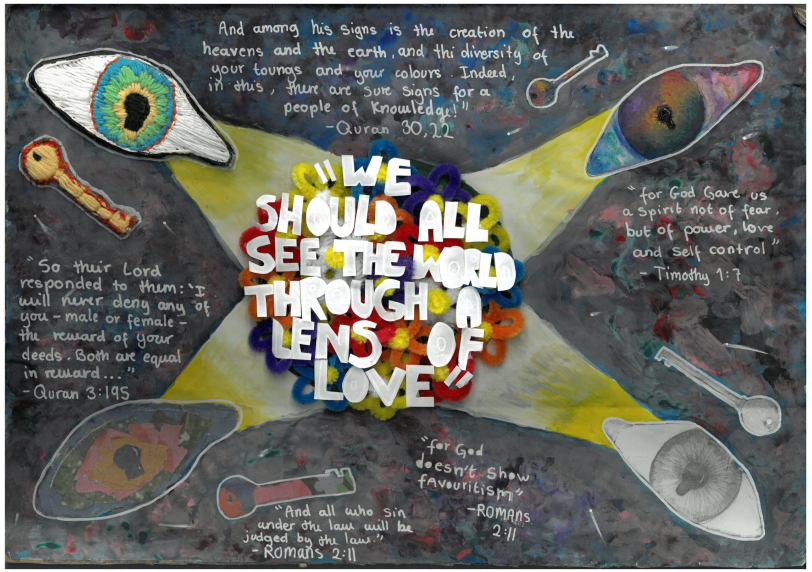
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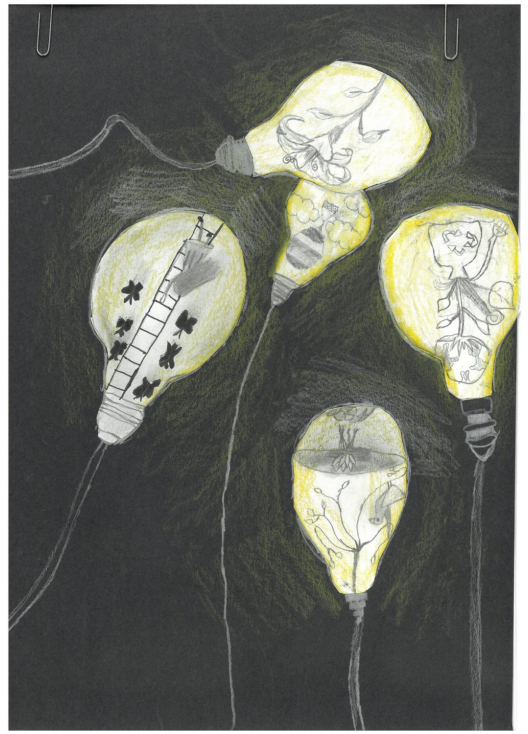
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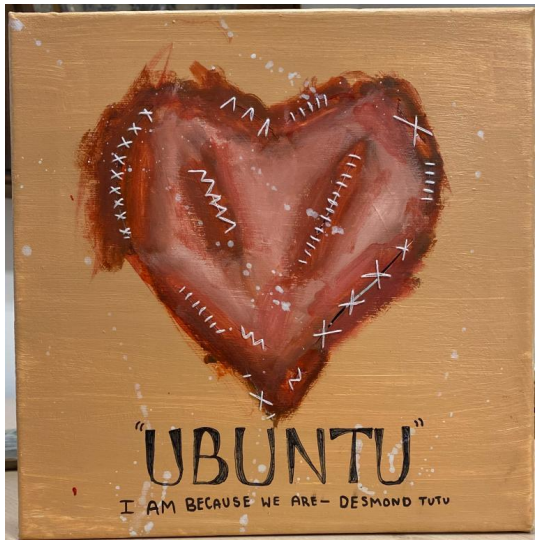


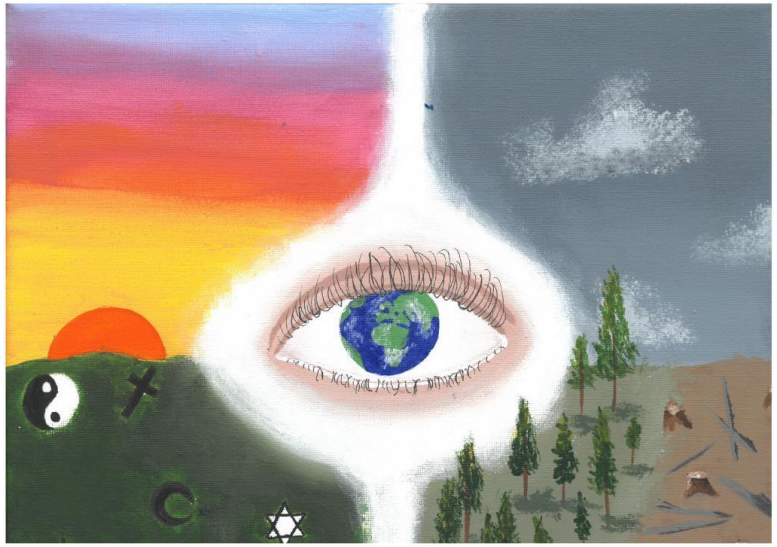







Bearing in mind your assessment of each piece, vote on your favourite.



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# Extra information

Each artwork is accompanied by an explanation from the artist(s). Read through the explanations and discuss with a partner whether or not they have:

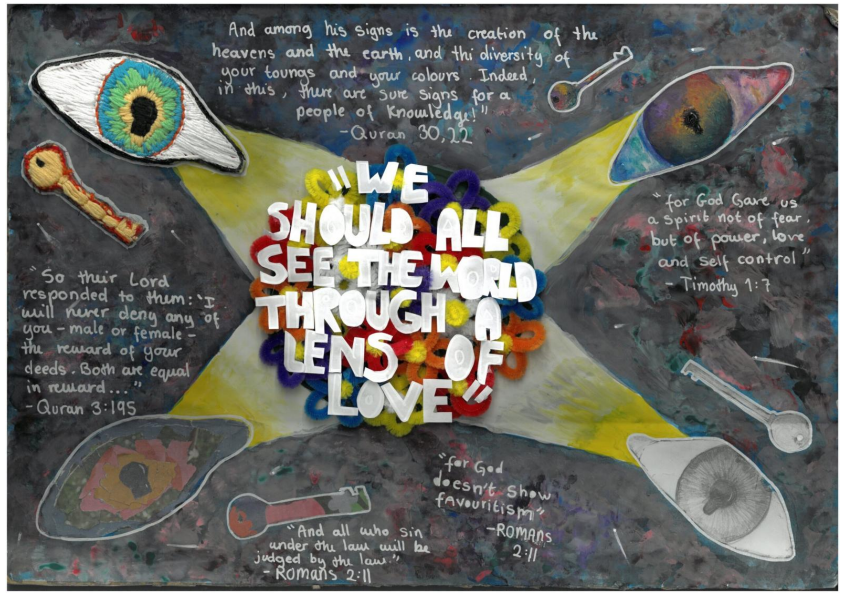
-helped you understand the piece any better

-made you notice extra details within the artwork

-helped you better understand any links between the artwork and the theme of ‘lighting the way for a shared future’

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# Brightening Our Views, by Elma, Isabelle, Zoey and Eva, aged 13, from Tolworth Girls School and Sixth Form




The theme we chose was 'Faith in humanity' as we all feel that everyone deserves to be accepted and loved, regardless of all our differences and similarities. Despite the fact that we have included religious quotes, our piece does not relate to one particular religion as, within our group, we practice various different religions and wanted to highlight the diversity, not just in our group, but within our school and community.

In the picture, there are eyes, which represent prejudiced and discriminatory views – for example, in the media (represented by the eye made of scraps of newspaper). They all reflect light on to the centre circle, which remains cheerful and bright despite this, which represents the strength that overcoming discrimination can display. The flowers surrounding in the circle represent personal growth and being able to grow as a person to overcome previous negative opinions. We tried to show this by putting keyholes for the eye's pupils with keys next to them, to show that peoples prejudiced minds can be 'unlocked' so that they can become kind and compassionate. Another acknowledgement of diversity in our piece, is the mixed mediums we have used such as: the eyes made from different materials (newspaper, paint, pencil and fabric).

Some key themes in our piece are forgiveness, perseverance and personal growth. These values are important as they help build our communities and help us learn to respect each other, despite our differences. We have included religious quotes that relate to these qualities to show that all religions, regardless of their deities and beliefs, all convey the same basic messages of compassion and acceptance, which shows that these are important values to all cultures. We all consider these qualities to be vitally important to help you become a helpful and kind member of your community, which is the reason we consider this theme to be so important.

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# Light a fire and use Racism as the fuel, by Castiel, aged 12, from Repham High School




Burning the Block of Racism.

The artwork of a block of wood with “racism” written on it, charred but not destroyed by fire, symbolizes the persistent challenge of racism and the unyielding spirit required to overcome it. This piece serves as a reminder that while racism continues to scar society but if we all clubbed together and continued to fight against it, racism cannot withstand the collective force of unity and respect. Embracing the theme “No to racism, yes to respect,” this representation invites us to reflect on what holds humanity together and how we can conquer the forces of division.

Racism, hatred, and bigotry are deeply entrenched issues that threaten to tear us apart. They are built on fear and ignorance, fostering division rather than unity. However, throughout history, individuals and communities have drawn upon values such as faith, hope, and love to combat these destructive forces. In Christianity, the concept of loving one’s neighbour as oneself is fundamental. The Bible states, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

This verse underscores the idea that all humans are equal and deserve respect and dignity, regardless of race or background.

Similarly, Islam teaches the unity of humanity, with the Qur’an stating, “O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another” (Qur’an 49:13). This verse emphasizes diversity as a means of fostering understanding and connection among different groups. Buddhism, too, advocates for compassion and empathy toward all living beings, highlighting the interconnectedness of life and the importance of overcoming ignorance and prejudice.

To conquer the forces of division, we must actively promote education and dialogue, encouraging open discussions about race and diversity. This involves listening to different perspectives and challenging stereotypes and prejudices. By cultivating empathy and respect, we can begin to dismantle the barriers that racism creates. This must happen and come from all humans, just like fire is integral to humans survival now we must fight Racism if we are to survive as a human race. This artwork on racism represents our ongoing struggle and determination to overcome prejudice. By saying “no to racism and yes to respect,” we embrace the values that unite us as one people. Faith, hope, love, music, and sports are powerful forces that can bind humanity together and help us create a more harmonious world for future generations.

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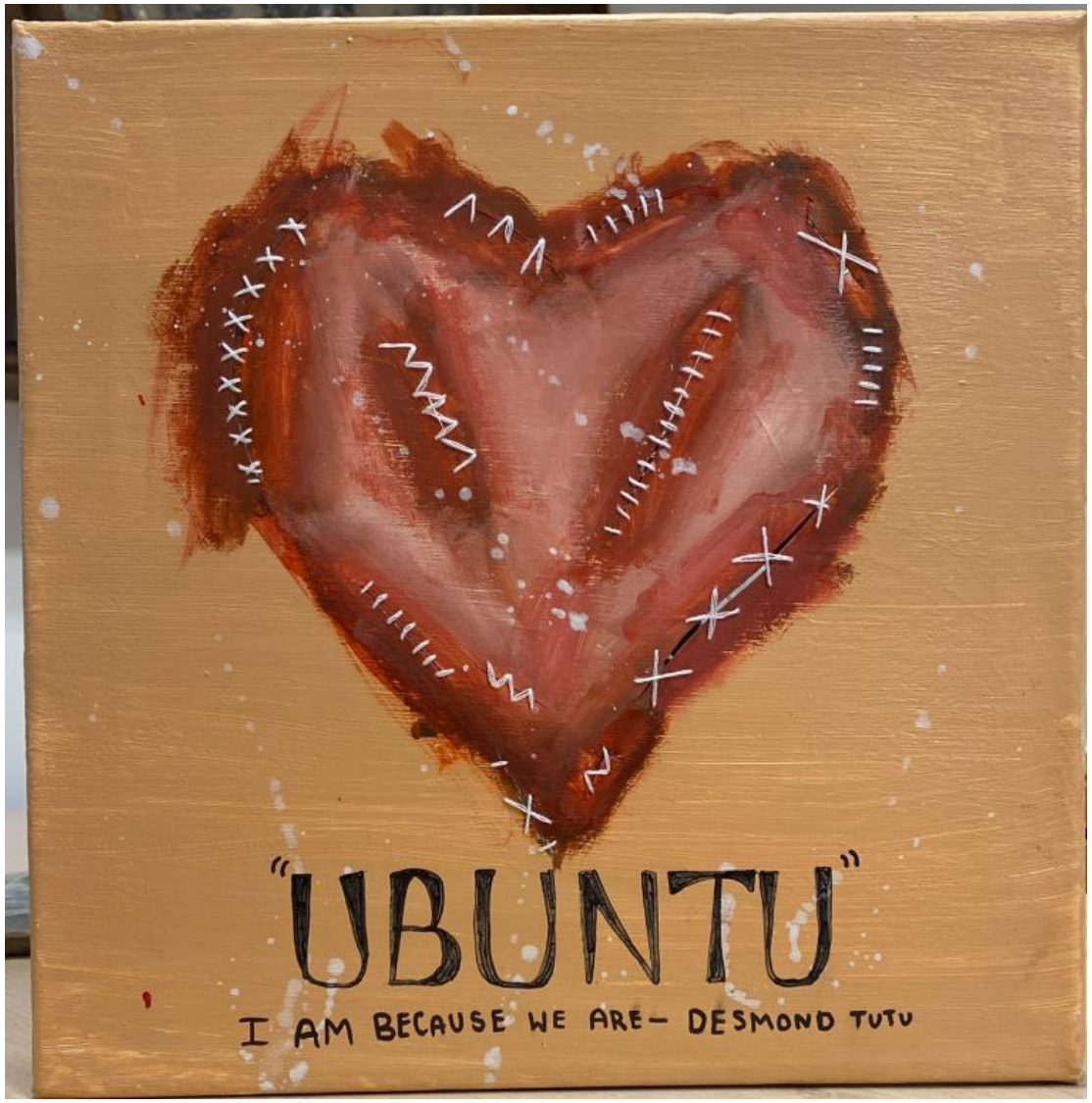
# A Light in The Dark, by Millie, aged 11 from Redruth School




I have created a metaphor about war and peace. It is spiritual because the flower represents peace as well as the light bulb. The darkness represents war. Looking beyond means looking beyond the dark times. I hope my creative work makes people think about war and peace. I wanted to show with the quote that peace can always come around if people work hard for it. I also want people to think how peace always arrives.

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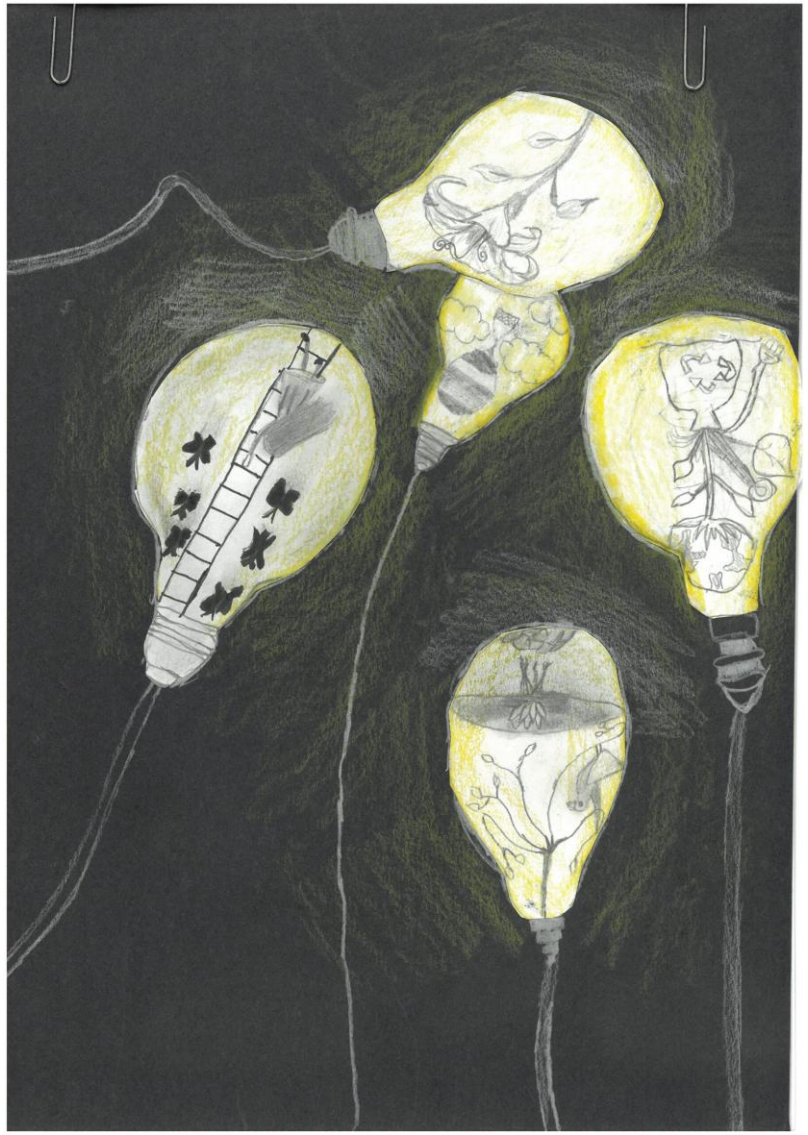
# “I am because we are”, by Gabriella, aged 12 from St Christophers School in Bahrain




Jo Cox: “We have far more in common with each other than that which divides us”. To me, this quote is not only important, but it is powerful and meaningful. Everyone is different right? Well, that’s what I tell myself but maybe that’s not 100% true. Not everyone has a family or a place to live, but whatever you do, affects and impacts on others. Our actions directly or indirectly affect everyone. Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said, “Bringing people together is what I call ‘Ubuntu’ which means ‘I am because we are.” This phrase really stuck with me, and I found myself linking this to this RE (Religious Education) project. In RE, it's good to explore the idea that all people have a different view of the world, but everyone has the same intentions of making life good, kinder and better overall. My artwork tells a story of the world being shattered apart but the people in this universe work together to piece it back together.  I created my piece on a canvas that showed a heart – something we all in common. I slashed this heart to reflect how so many – all of us in fact suffer in this world but importantly our hearts can be mended, and we can help each other to come together. Jo Cox was right we have so much more in common and we can see that in the way our hearts can hurt, and Tutu was right too I am because we are – collectively we are part of a human race that should be coming together to help and heal each other and not be divided by our special differences. I hope people will notice our world and the people in it. Everyone is Important and people need to know that.

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# Ideas Of Life, by Margaret, aged 12, from Abbey Gate College



I chose to create this because each lightbulb represents something I think of in life and the light bulbs represent the ideas. The first light bulb (the flower) shows the use of wildlife in the world; the flower is majestic with individual petals like the world with individual countries making up one big awesome flower.

The second light bulb, the hot air balloon, shows me the hope of life; the fact of flight which brings joy and peace.

In the third light bulb there is a paper bag which shows our changes, but inside the bag are wires and a high thermometer that represents global warming and our earth is trapped in a weed. This makes me feel sad like there is no hope, but we go back to the paper bag showing us there is something we can do – reuse recycle and reduce – giving us hope once again.

In the fourth light bulb, a bird shows the beauty of life over a calm still pond hanging on a simple yet beautiful branch.

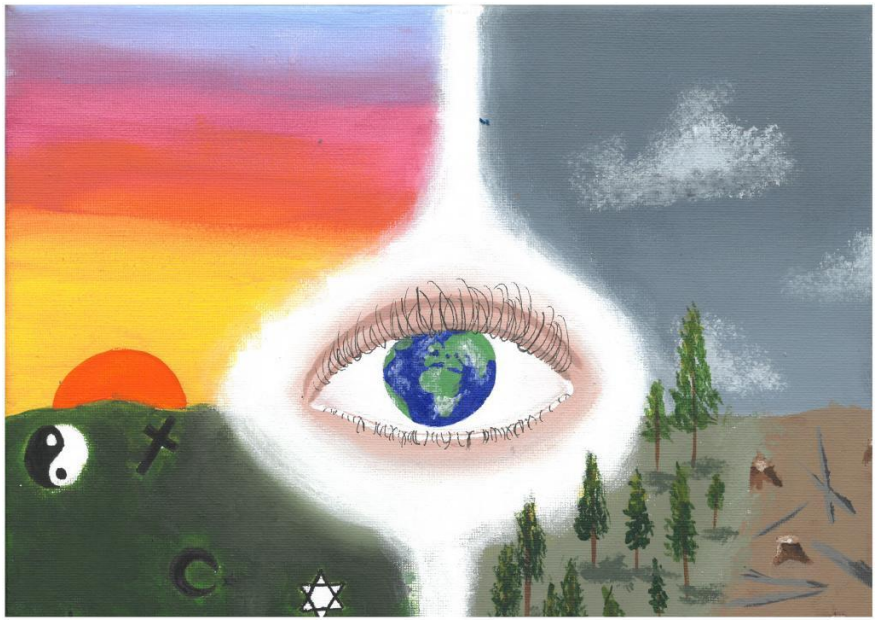
Finally, in the last light bulb a girl is climbing the ladder to a better afterlife.

This is a topic I often think about and I like to assume there are beautiful things up there like butterflies.

The main message of the piece is that ‘darkness can’t defeat light’.

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# The World Through a Lens, by Chloe, aged 13, from St Christophers School



My artwork is of an eye with the earth as its pupil. On one side of the background is a sunset and multiple different religious symbols and on the other is a cloudy sky with a forest, half of which is cut down.

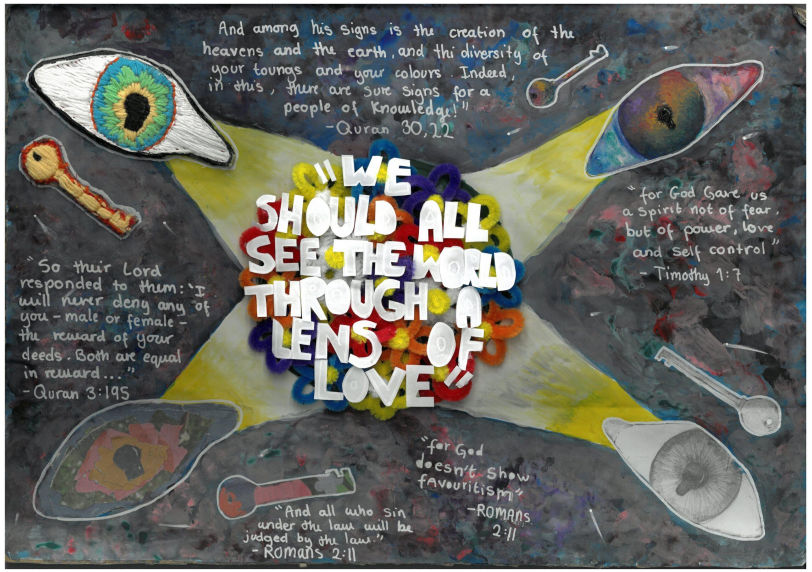
My artwork represents that everyone has a different view of the world, some being very religious, and some focused on matters like global warming or political views. I want to tell you that even though we look at the world from different angles, we are all facing the same problems together as humans and we can't hope to even think about solving them if we don't do it together.

I had a hard time trying to express what I wanted to say in my art, my first idea was to do one side religious, one side atheist but when I thought about it I could not find what I wanted to show and so I changed my idea completely, that rather everyone being separated and divided, that we, on the contrary, are together and we're just looking at the same things but with individual perspectives and separate mindsets. That your religion does not define you, but it changes and shapes your lens and perception of the world.

What I personally like about my work is that it can be interpreted in many ways, just like an opinion can. My vision for the future is that people will stop looking at someone and immediately judging them based on their religion and rather take some time to get to know them and realise that we are not so far away and different from each other, and that we are much closer than we think. One humanity.

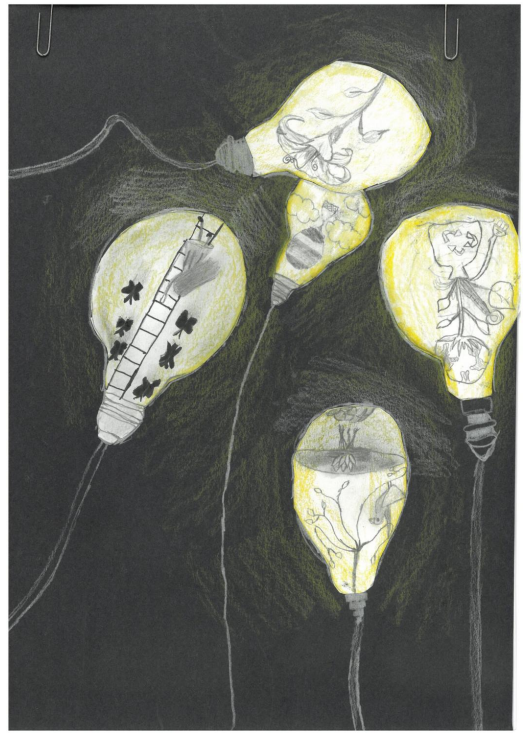
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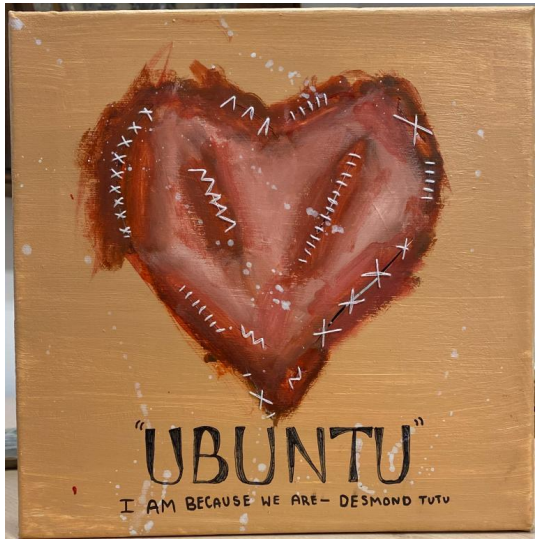


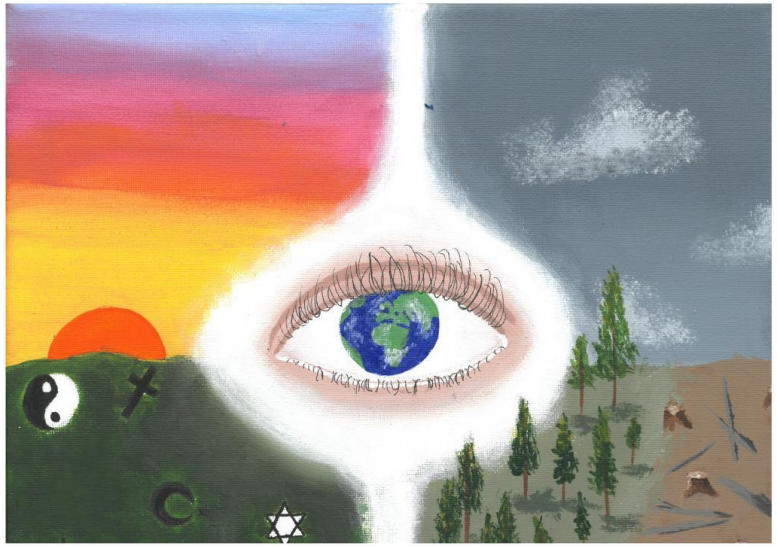







Bearing in mind your new understanding of each piece, vote on your favourite. Reflect upon whether the favourite piece stayed the same or changed and why this was.



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# Lighting the way for a shared future

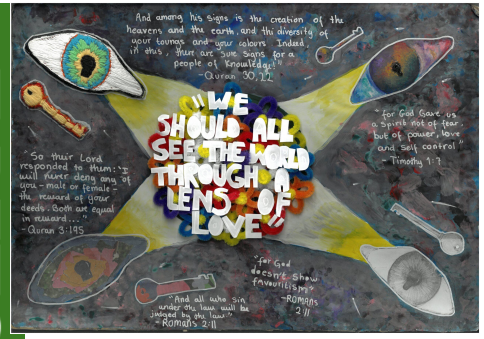
The theme of Inter Faith Week 2026 is ‘lighting the way for a shared future’.

This can be split into several smaller ideas. Two of these are ‘lighting the way’ and ‘a shared future’.

On the next slide, you will create a venn diagram to help you consider which of the six artworks link best with ‘lighting the way’, which link best with ‘a shared future’ and which link well with both.

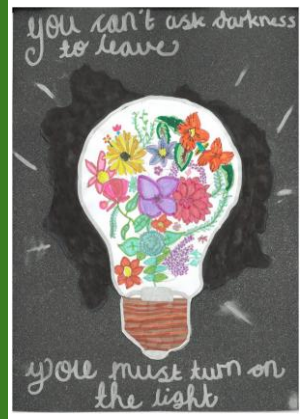
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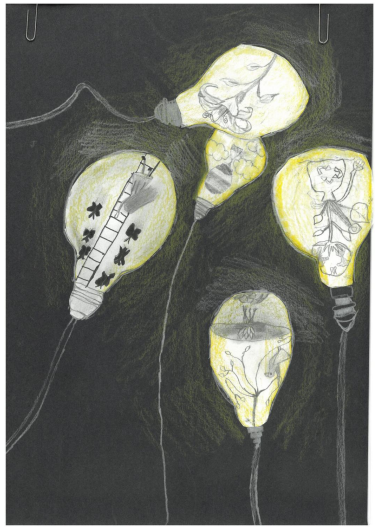


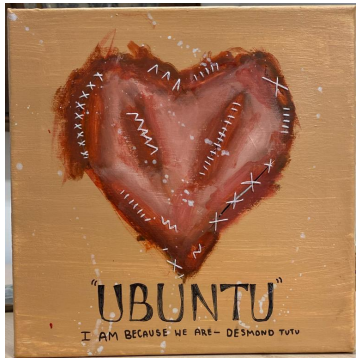


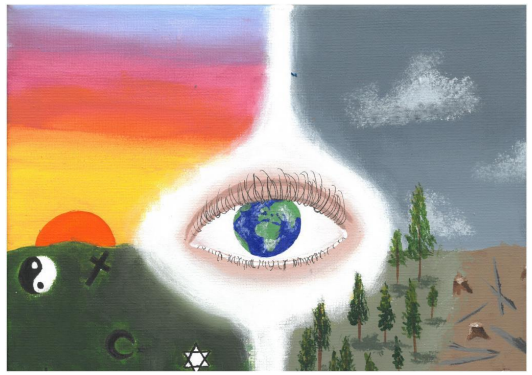



# Lighting the way

# A shared future





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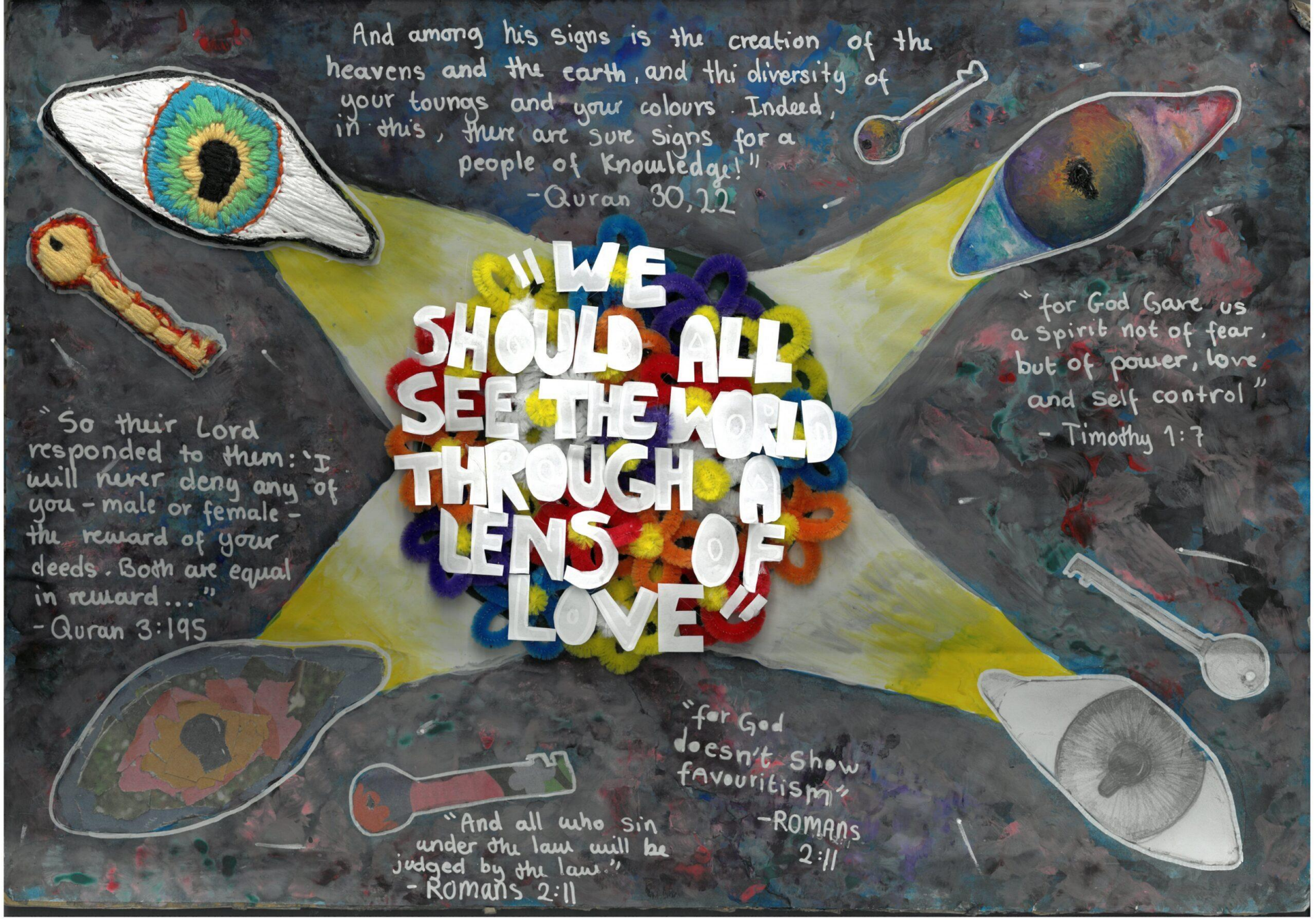
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Take some time to quietly consider your own response to the theme. Your ideas might have been sparked by the six pieces of art, but you might also want to consider the thinking you have been doing at other times during Inter Faith Week too. Create a table showing your ideas.

| My ideas about 'Lighting the way' | My ideas about 'A shared future' | My ideas about the theme as a whole ('lighting the way for a shared future') |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

You can use your ideas as the basis for your own artwork on the theme of 'lighting the way for a shared future'. Or, why not use them as the basis of a poem written for Inter Faith Week 2026's national poetry competition?
https://www.ifw4schools.co.uk/competition-2026

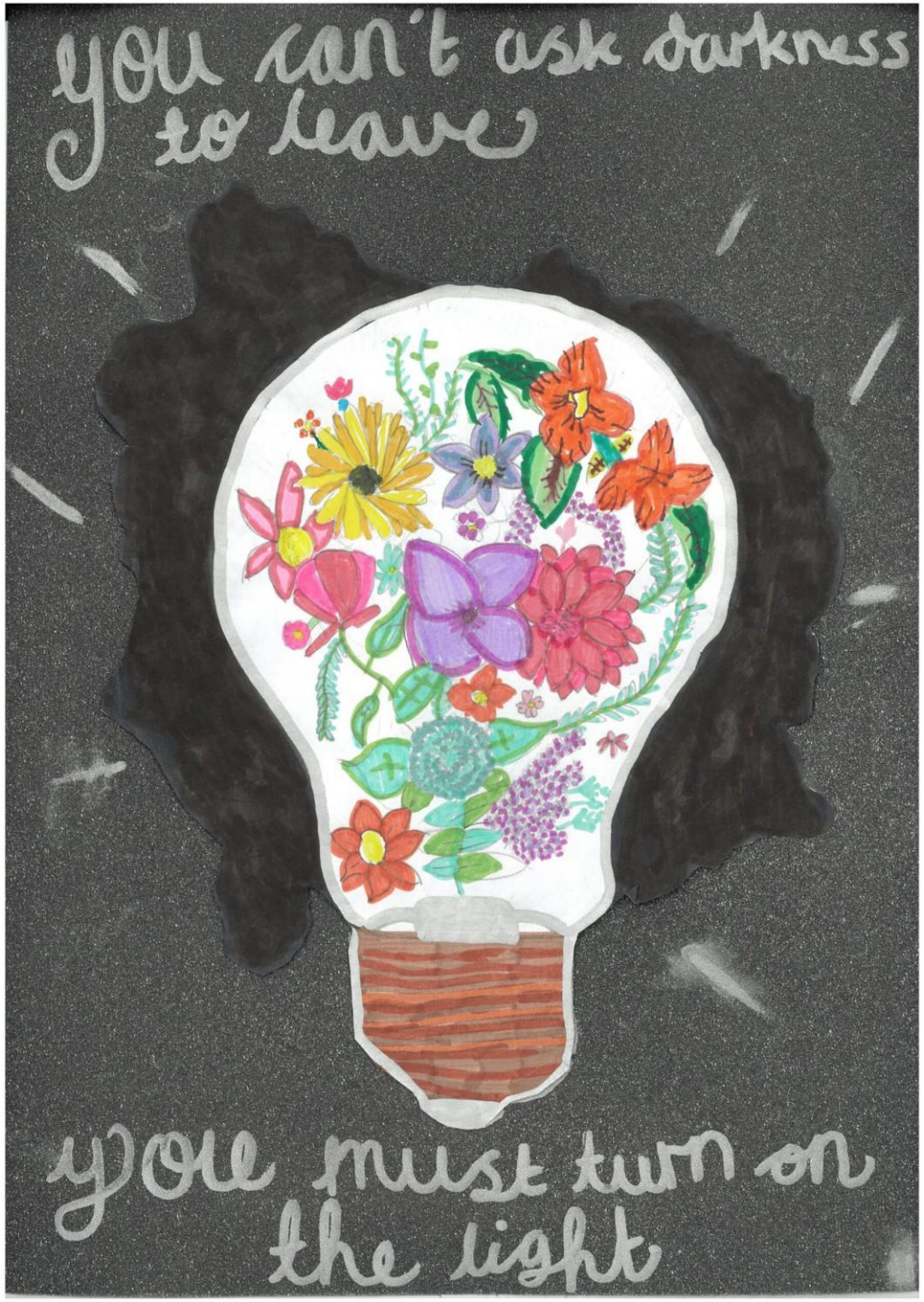
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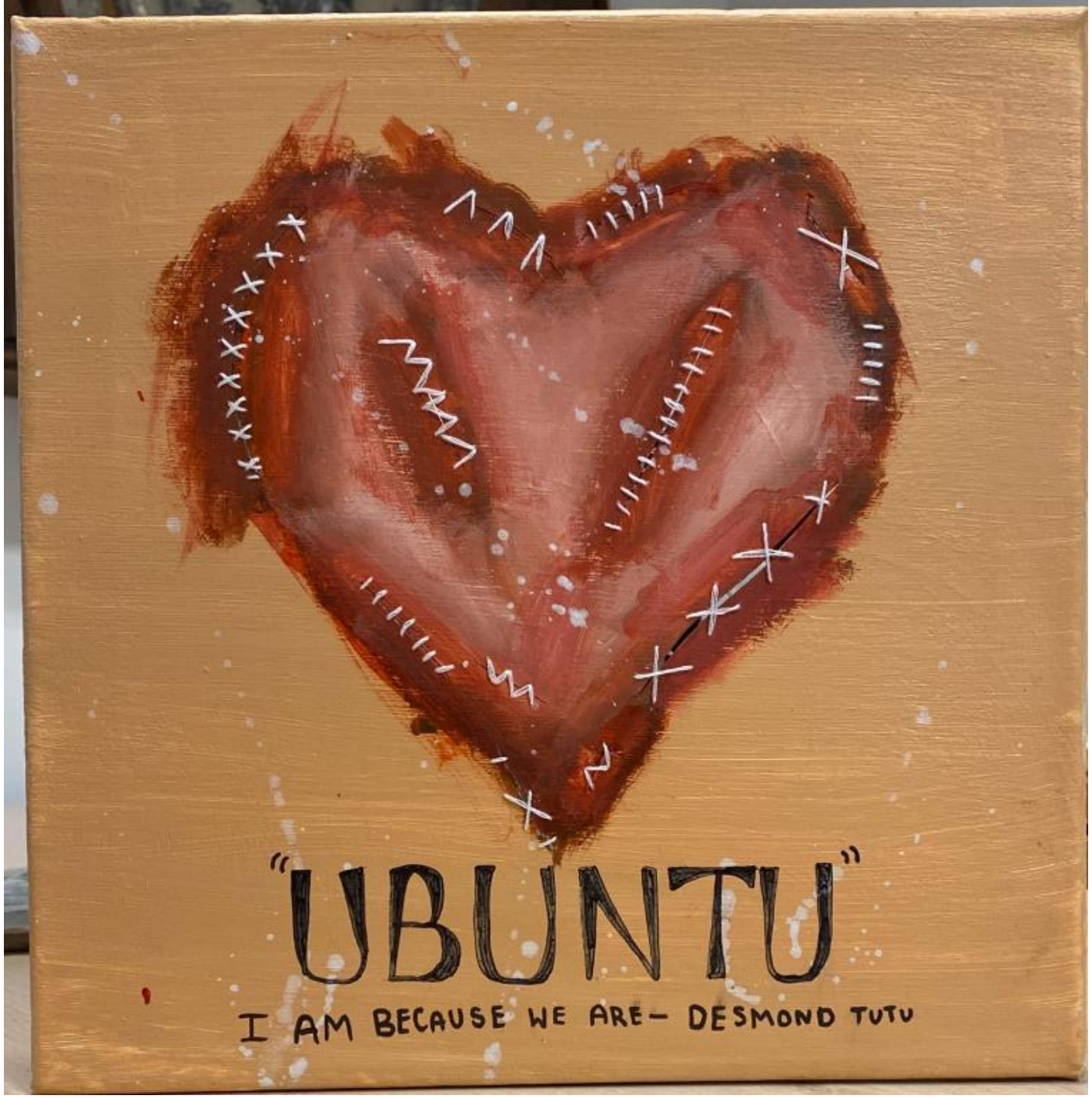



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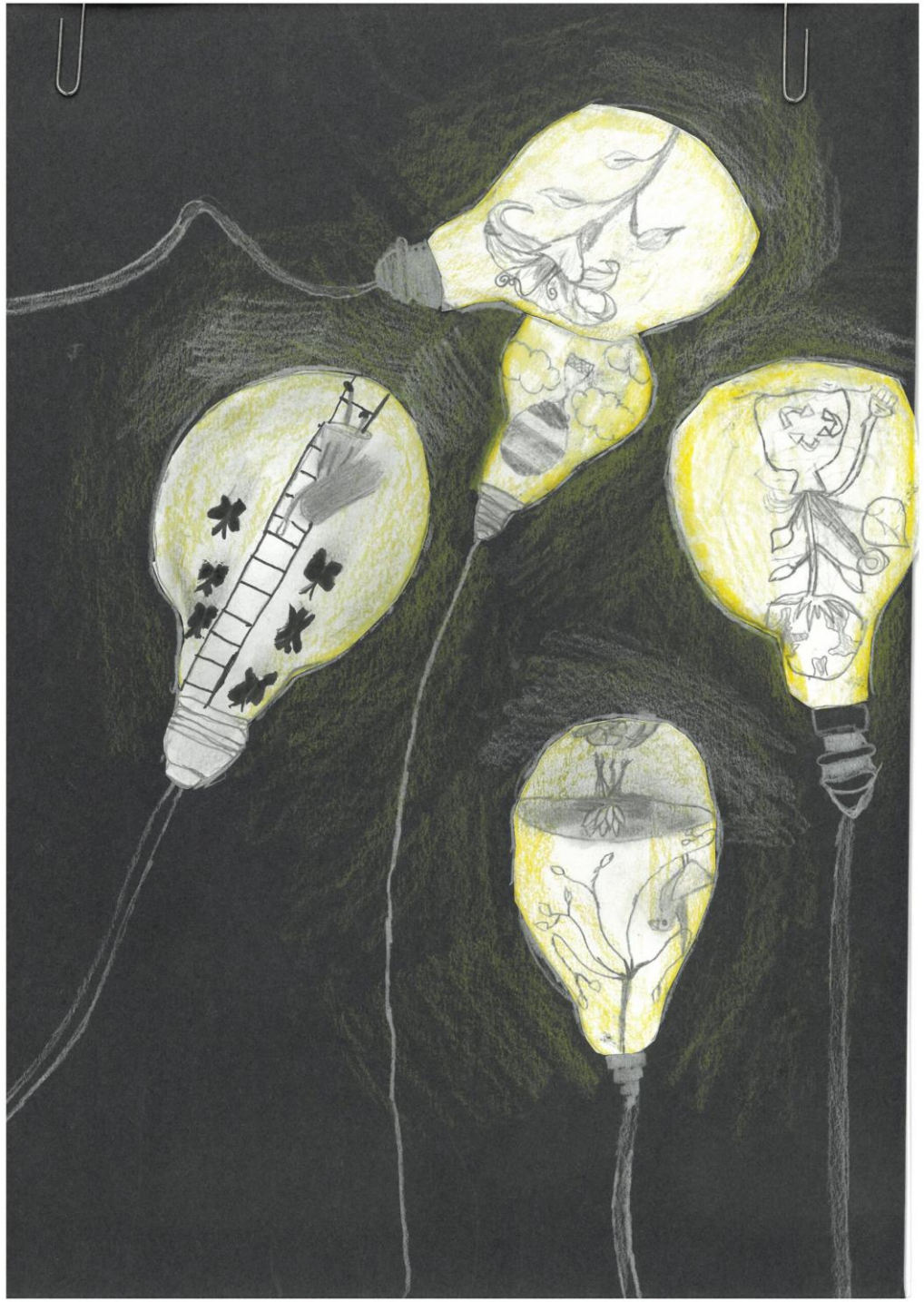



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