

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed judges, and those who wandered in here by accident,

I can't express how incredibly shocked I am to stand here holding this award. Honestly, I thought my chances were slimmer than a paintbrush bristle! But clearly, I must be better at art than I am at managing expectations. Thank you all for proving my mother wrong; she always said playing with paint wouldn't get me anywhere!

I'd like to thank my fellow artists--you all put the 'art' in 'smarty-pants' and made this competition tougher than trying to fold a fitted sheet. To the judges, I promise whatever you see in my work, I intended it that way, even if it's just a suspicious smudge.

Also, a big shout-out to coffee and late-night panic for helping me meet the deadlines--and of course, to my cat for consistently knocking over my brushes and adding unexpected 'enhancements.'

In all seriousness, I am truly honored. I look forward to creating even more pieces that challenge everyone's interpretation...including my own! Thank you!