

Pairs with Alison Saar, *untitled from Crossroads*, 1989

[[Optional Description copy]] Manager of School and Gallery Programs La’Kayla Williams describes how an encounter with Alison Saar’s sculpture feels like an encounter with magic.

[[Transcript]]

My name is La’Kayla Williams. I am the Manager of School and Gallery Programs at the Walker Arts Center. I have been here almost nine months, and I am a visual artist and aspiring filmmaker. I’m looking at Alison Saar’s untitled from Crossroads, 1989. It is a figure, a sculpture. It looks like the body of a woman or a person who was assigned female at birth. And when you get down to the ankles and feet, it transforms into branches, like a tree.

I know the artist is a Black woman, an African American woman, who has interest in Black diasporic religious and spiritual systems. And in African American religious history, crossroads, or “the crossroads,” holds important historical and spiritual value. It is a site where the physical world that we know and inhabit and move through meets the spiritual world that is always kind of hovering above or below. And I think that the way she is the tree and she is also what we recognize as a human woman really speaks to how these worlds exist together, even though you may not recognize one of them.

It makes me feel that magic is real, which is something that I say all the time. It's a running theme in all the work that I do. It feels as though things that we perceive can change at any moment. That something that we are familiar with can become unfamiliar at any second. And that is a scary prospect, but also an exciting one. I think that we, in this society, get a very prepackaged, predetermined understanding of what's possible, and what's real, even. And I love it when art can disrupt that.