As the Sea Rises – Blue Crystals Revisited no. 9
Janet Filomeno
2018, ink, mica, acrylic paint on canvas
72 x 72 inches

LET’S LOOK
What do you see in this work?
What organic and geometric elements can you find in this painting?
How do you think the artist created this work?
What do you suppose the significance might be of the artist only using red, blue and white in this artwork?
What emotions do you feel when you look at this work? Why do you think that is?

ABOUT THE ARTWORK
Gently sweeping swirls of deep blue and white paint spread across the center of a square cream-colored canvas. Several layers of paint, tiny droplets and energetic splatters contrast with bright red rectangular shapes – some solid and some open, like empty frames – appear along the outer edges of the piece. A collection of smaller geometric shapes seem to float in a stack in the upper right corner. Near the center, one solid and one open rectangle draw the viewer’s eye inward, framing a curious swirl of blue and white paint.

Like most of Filomeno’s work, this piece was created without any plans or preliminary drawings. Her artistic process is intuitive - based on a personal feeling or instinct. She begins by placing a blank canvas on the floor and just looking at it. When an idea strikes, Filomeno mixes different fluids and paints together. Then she throws, flings, and pours the liquids onto the canvas, moving and shaking it to direct the flow of paint. This results in a surface built of many layers some of which are see-through, or transparent. It can take several days for the layers to dry, allowing Filomeno time to study the work to remove unwanted elements, and plan her next move. It is not unusual for a painting to take many months to be completed.
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Janet Filomeno has felt the need to create from a very early age. As a toddler, she would frequently draw and make marks on the wallpaper near her crib, always keeping her hands active. Her father recognized and nurtured this expressive urge by encouraging her to continue exploring, and by giving her art supplies to support her work. As an adult, she still makes art in a similar way by adding, removing, and scratching through paint to make a mark or a line.

Filomeno is inspired by almost everything around her, but bodies of water are a continuous theme that runs throughout her work. All aspects of life on earth revolve around this essential element made up of “blue crystals”. Filomeno created the first paintings in the series in 2002 as a response to the daily stresses and emotions that she experienced after the tragic events of 9/11. Nearly twenty years later, with ecological threats and other worries constantly churning, she returned to the colors and techniques used in the Blue Crystal Series to express what felt like a similar state of mind.

Feeling Blue?
Filomeno created the original Blue Crystals series in the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy in New York City. Can you think of a time in your life when you felt affected by a world news event? What kind of emotions do you recall feeling? Create an abstract artwork that expresses your response to this event. What colors, materials and/or body movements might best communicate your thoughts and feelings?

Artful Advertising
Imagine this painting is the cover art for a newly released book or music album. What is the title and genre? Who would the audience be? Create a one-page advertisement for this album or book that includes a brief description of the content, some quotes from notable reviewers, and the altered cover itself, if tools are available to create one.

Personal Mapping
Red rectangles are often used on maps to mark areas of data collection or to highlight a specific area of interest. What significance might they hold in Filomeno’s painting? Think of some memorable things you have experienced in your life and where they happened. Create a collage that uses the concept of a map to tell these stories. You might use preprinted or self-created maps, colors and symbols to point toward important memories. When finished, share your personal map with a fellow student.