

THE HEALING AQAL



January 29 – February 28, 2024

**Benedict and Dorothy Gorecki Gallery & Lounge,
Benedicta Arts Center**

The Healing Aqal is an intentionally carved space, an infinite well, holding our collective healing. Translated from Somali to English, aqal translates to hut. Creating work to build an understanding between cultures, Ifrah Mansour learned how to create aqals from elders in the Somali community in Minnesota.

When people go inside the hut, some have said that they feel cocooned. Some feel cool and have an instant need to sit down and adjust their posture. When Mansour goes in the hut, she asks a question that people may never have been asked before: What heals you, what brings you healing, and where do you need healing?



This show qualifies as an Artistic Engagement event! Scan the QR code for instructions on how to earn your credit.

CONNECT

TOPICS AND THEMES THIS EXHIBITION ENGAGES WITH:

- Immigration
- Cultural displacement
- Meditation
- Embrace Difference
- Installation Art
- Generational knowledge

ONLINE RESOURCES

<https://www.instagram.com/ifrahmansour/?hl=en>

<https://www.csbsju.edu/fine-arts/visual-arts/the-healing-aqal>

ENGAGE

Ifrah Mansour created the aqal as a space for people to reflect, think, and meditate on ideas.

- What thoughts did you reflect on throughout the exhibit? What emotions did you experience?
- When Mansour says, “I think we heal if we build communities,” what does she mean?

Somali weaving often utilizes finger weaving techniques to create large, intricate, gorgeous mats. The aqal is a dome-like dwelling invented by our nomadic ancestors. The beauty of the Somali aqal is that everything is from nature - the mats are made from collected fibers, the rope is made from tree bark. This indigenous way of building became a lifeline during the Somali Civil War as people found themselves in the middle of the desert in need of shelter.

- Why is it important to learn from our elders and keep up traditions?
- As families move to different places, how do traditions and cultural knowledge change?
- How do you think generational knowledge influences you as a person and the choices you make?

Ifrah has created aqals and placed them throughout Minneapolis. She has shown them in many different settings, from parks to churches.

- How does a space influence a piece of artwork?
- Depending on the setting, what other feelings or emotions might it invoke?
- How does installation art become documented and shared with others?