

We Invoke Them Still

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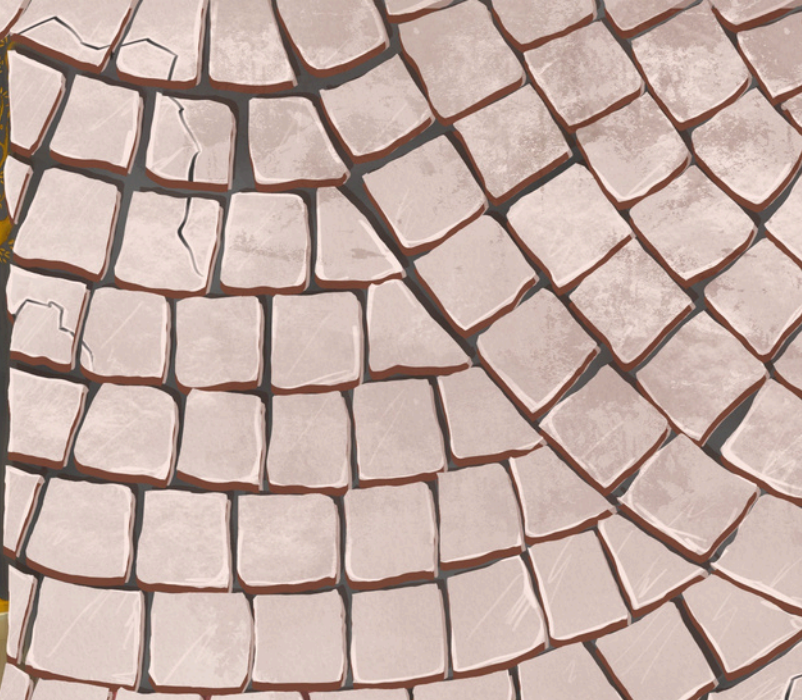
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Epic Threads

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IN my piece *We Invoke Them Still*, I wanted to explore how the ancient gods linger in the background of our modern world. Even though they're no longer widely worshipped, we still invoke their imagery, stories, and names. Each panel became a way to show how these figures continue to shape ideas of exploration, healing, and achievement.

Artemis, in the bottom left, became a symbol in modern space exploration during the Artemis I mission in 2022. I based her pose on the *Diana of Versailles*, which captures the motion and strength I associate with her. I included constellations tied to her mythology: Orion, Ursa Major, and Scorpio, because they remind us that the stars we see today are the same ones the ancient Greeks saw. In the *Homeric Hymn to Artemis*, she is called “the shining one”¹, an epithet that evokes the radiance I wanted in this panel. I was also inspired by the myth of Orion, who, according to Apollodorus, was “placed among the stars” after his death.² Robin Hard notes that Orion’s story is one of the clearest examples of a mortal whose myth shaped the constellations,³ which made him a perfect figure to include alongside the modern Orion spacecraft from NASA’s Artemis II mission.

The middle square focuses on Asclepius, the god of healing. I used the *Statue of Asclepius* from the National Museums Liverpool as my reference. Ancient writers describe him as one who “heals every sickness of humankind,”⁴ and I wanted that compassion at the centre of the piece. The poppies reference ancient medicinal plants, while the ambulance represents contemporary medical care. Louise Cilliers explains how his sanctuaries were places where “dreams and ritual incubation formed part of the therapeutic process,”⁵ which helped me explore the spiritual dimension of ancient healing. Pausanias similarly notes that “many who sleep in his temple depart cured,”⁶ reinforcing the idea that healing was both physical and divine. I wanted this panel to show how deeply our medical symbols like the Rod of Asclepius (often confused with Hermes’ caduceus⁷) are rooted in ancient traditions.

The top left depicts Nike, the goddess of victory, inspired by the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*. Hesiod describes her as one who “brings glory to the victorious,”⁸ and I wanted to connect that idea of honour with modern athletic achievement. The olive tree and *kotinos* wreath reference ancient Olympic prizes, while the figure of Gabby Thomas celebrates a contemporary athlete whose success channels Nike’s spirit.

Across all three images, I depicted the gods as statue-like figures – powerful but distant, as if watching over us rather than stepping directly into our world. The natural landscapes behind them represent the parts of life that haven’t changed, while the modern elements feel deliberately new and imposed. Together, they show how we still look to these gods even in modern life.

¹Homeric Hymn to Artemis 1.

²Apollodorus, *Library* 1.4.3.

³Robin Hard, *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology* (London, 2004), p. 221.

⁴Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 3.5.

⁵Louise Cilliers, “Asclepius and the Ancient Greek Healing Cults,” *Acta Classica* 51 (2008), p. 34.

⁶Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 2.27.3.

⁷Britannica, “Rod of Asclepius,” accessed 16 May 2026.

⁸Hesiod, *Theogony* 383–385.

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