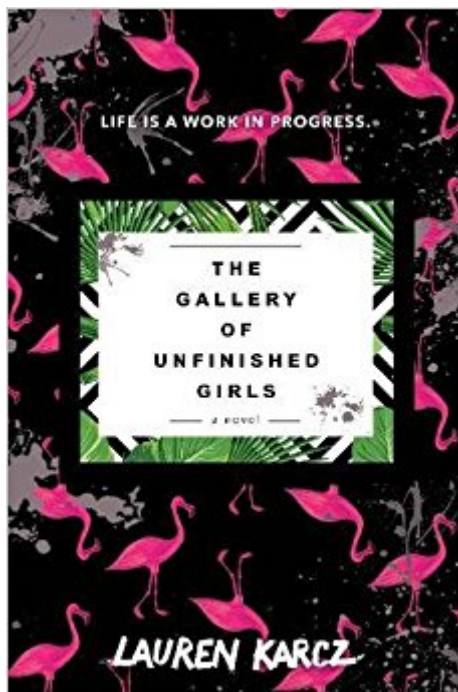


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The Gallery Of Unfinished Girls



Synopsis

A beautiful and evocative look at identity and creativity, *The Gallery of Unfinished Girls* is a stunning debut in magical realism. Perfect for fans of *The Walls Around Us* and *Bone Gap*. Mercedes Moreno is an artist. At least, she thinks she could be, even though she hasn't been able to paint anything worthwhile in the past year. Her lack of inspiration might be because her abuela is in a coma. Or the fact that Mercedes is in love with her best friend, Victoria, but is too afraid to admit her true feelings. Despite Mercedes's creative block, art starts to show up in unexpected ways. A piano appears on her front lawn one morning, and a mysterious new neighbor invites Mercedes to paint with her at the Red Mangrove Estate. At the Estate, Mercedes can create in ways she hasn't ever before. But Mercedes can't take anything out of the Estate, including her new-found clarity. Mercedes can't live both lives forever, and ultimately she must choose between this perfect world of art and truth and a much messier reality. A dreamy and subtle work of art, *The Gallery of Unfinished Girls* explores love, family, and the maddening, magical drive to create art. —Adi Alsaid, author of *Let's Get Lost*

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Customer Reviews

A dreamy and subtle work of art, *THE GALLERY OF UNFINISHED GIRLS* explores love, family, and the maddening, magical drive to create art. —(Adi Alsaid, author of *Let's Get Lost*) —Francesca Lia Block fans will be right at home with this mix of magical realism, girl power self-actualization, and the concept that family can be both biological and found, and they'll likely keep an eye out to see what this debut author will do next. —(Bulletin of the Center for

Children's Books) The novel's mix of self-discovery, art making, and the unknown should resonate with fans of A.S. King's work. • (Publishers Weekly) • (Booklist)

Seventeen-year-old Mercedes Moreno is caught in a place of waiting - for her beloved Abuela to awaken from her stroke-induced coma, for her mom to return from her bedside vigil at the hospital in San Juan. She's waiting for some sort of inspiration to continue her artwork. And most importantly, she's waiting for some kind of resolution on her feelings for her best friend. As close as they are, could Victoria ever think of Mercedes as anything but a friend? Meanwhile, a new neighbor introduces Mercedes to a different world filled with other artists. It's here that Mercedes begins to unravel some of her quandries. Karcz creates both compelling storylines and characters, realistic and engaging. Mercedes Moreno is both unique, yet a person to whom all of us can relate and cheer for.

Beautifully and engagingly written, *The Gallery of Unfinished Girls* moves both quickly and slowly at the same time, and I think this has something to do with the surreal elements that make this novel so difficult to put down. It's exciting and tender, funny and heartbreaking, and every other perfect paradox you could ever really imagine. I'm not a big YA reader, so in all honesty, I don't know how this book fits into the overall genre. But, as I read, I kept thinking to myself: this is not YA - its thematic elements are refreshingly, painfully, and honestly adult, but placed in a high school environment. It speaks to questions of identity and "why the heck am I here and what am I 'supposed' to do vs what I 'want' to do," which as an almost 30 year old reader...well, let's just say that it hits home...in a very good, very challenging, and very cathartic way. It's an amazing read...please don't miss this one.

Maybe potential is all I have: energy, all held-up and trembling, waiting to be set free. • *The Gallery of Unfinished Girls* has an ephemeral magic that surrounds you as you're reading the story. It wraps you in comfort and possibility and creativity. We follow Mercedes Moreno, struggling art students, as she tries to find her clarity after being unable to finish a piece over the past year. New neighbor, Lilia Solis, brings possibility with the mysterious Red Mangrove Estate, where Mercedes finds herself, and her art, flourishing. Now, Mercedes must make a choice between a perfect world of art and a much more complicated reality. Things I Liked The writing is so clear and descriptive. It breathes, and creates a beautiful imagery that matched the artistry of the story. It's purposeful and intentional, but poetic and bright. I loved the

references to different artists, of all kinds - painters, musicians. I love how they discuss the importance of art and it's value. Art is connecting to others, to yourself, and it means something. I really loved basically everything about Mercedes and her journey. She's frustrated and unsure in herself and her work, but she wants to move forward and progress. She longs for a future she's unsure of, but fears the change at the same time. As the story progresses, we see Mercedes really start to accept her history and what that means for her growth. The magic in the story was so natural and effortless. It was so organically integrated with Mercedes's life and the world around her. It was mysterious and mischievous and a character on its own. Things I Didn't Like: Personal issue, but I couldn't stand how Victoria called Mercedes 'dearie', it just felt so out of place and it pulled me out of the story. I also found some transitions within chapters to be fairly abrupt. This might be due to reading an ARC and the natural demarcations in the chapters were not defined. But there were a few abrupt scene changes that made for some clunky reading, where I had to reorient myself in the story. The Gallery of Unfinished Girls is a beautiful story of embracing your future and personal growth. Mercedes is a great character who is easy to relate to and embrace on her journey. The writing is beautiful, the characters are lively, and the setting is literally magical. The Gallery of Unfinished Girls highlights the magic that exists in our daily lives and the beauty that we find in ourselves and our potential. I received a copy of the book from HarperTeen via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

This book is absolutely lovely. The language and imagery feels like it's being painted on your heart. But the gorgeous language isn't hollow. It lays out this riveting story that sucks you in from the first minute, when a piano mysteriously appears on the lawn of Mercedes and Angela, whose mother has gone to look after their Abuela and left them feeling alone. And terribly lost. And the story doesn't let you go, pulling you into a magical world where art can only be perfect at night, where sisters can only find each other by losing themselves, and where love is so simple and yet so terribly complex. And it's beautiful. You should definitely read this book. But be careful, because once you pick it up, you will not be able to put it down. And those twelve things you wanted to do will not get done. And you won't even care.

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