The answer is a median of nums[i].

Proof. Suppose that

$$M = \max \left\{ nums[i] \; \middle| \; 1 \leq i \leq n \right\} \text{ and } m = \min \left\{ nums[i] \; \middle| \; 1 \leq i \leq n \right\}.$$

We first prove that the answer lies in [m, M]. Let t be a number that is less than m. Then there is $\varepsilon > 0$ such that $m = t + \varepsilon$. Hence

$$|m - nums[i]| = |t + \varepsilon - nums[i]| \le |t - nums[i]| + |\varepsilon - nums[i]|$$
.

Thus, |m - nums[i]| < |t - nums[i]|. So that t is not the answer. Similarly, if t > M, then we have |M - nums[i]| < |t - nums[i]|. Therefore, the answer is lies in [m, M]. Next, notice that for any $t \in [m, M]$,

$$|t - m| + |t - M| = m - t + t - M = m - M,$$

which is remain constant. Hence, we can remove all element of nums that are equal to m and M since that will not change the answer.

Now we obtained a new array nums' from nums. By the above discussion, we have that the answer is lies in the minimum and the maximum of nums'.

Continue this process, until the number of element in the new array is less or equal to 2, say this array is $final_nums$.

• If this number is 1, then the answer is $final_nums[1]$, since $final_nums[1]$ is the number that minimize

$$|x-final_nums[1]| = |final_nums[1] - final_nums[1]| = 0$$

• If this number is 2, then by the above discussion, for any number x lies in $final_nums[1]$ and $final_nums[2]$ can be the answer since

$$|x - final_nums[1]| = |x - final_nums[2]|$$
.

Finally, since for every step, we remove the minimum and maxium from nums, hence, the median can be a answer.