VOICE
A FOR FREEDOMS EXHIBITION

TAMPA MUSEUM OF ART YOUTH COUNCIL
THIRD ANNUAL FALL STUDENT EXHIBITION

OCTOBER 26TH, 2018
COVER ARTWORK

The Forgotten Face (detail)
by Natalie Ulm
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FOR FREEDOMS PARTNERSHIP

For this year’s exhibition, the Tampa Museum of Art Youth Council has partnered with For Freedoms, a nonprofit arts service organization. The For Freedoms nationwide project aims to promote civil discourse regarding politics, commerce, and education through decentralized public events. As a result of our partnership, we have decided to implement the theme of “Voice” to provide local high school artists an environment to share their ideas regarding the current state of our nation today.

For more information regarding For Freedoms and its initiatives, please visit ForFreedoms.org.

WHAT DOES FREEDOM MEAN TO YOU?

On September 28th, the Youth Council hosted a lawn sign making event as a part of our partnership with For Freedoms and in preparation of the upcoming exhibition. During the event, participants were encouraged to produce and display their definition of freedom by completing lawn signs that say:

“Freedom Of...”
“Freedom From...”
“Freedom For...”
“Freedom To...”

TMA Youth Council Lawn Sign Event
Instagram @TMAYouth
TAMPA MUSEUM OF ART YOUTH COUNCIL

The Tampa Museum of Art (TMA) Youth Council was established in 2016 with 12 Hillsborough County high school students. The Youth Council spends the summer learning about careers in museums, meeting museum professionals, and creating dynamic programming for their peers in an extensive Summer Session. They meet regularly throughout the year to execute programs, like this exhibition, here at the Museum.

For more information regarding the Tampa Museum of Art Youth Council and its upcoming projects, please visit tampamuseum.org/youth-council

THE EXHIBITION

The TMA Youth Council’s Third Annual Student Exhibition invites local high school students to showcase their artistic talents and develop an appreciation for art while having the opportunity to participate in the local art community. The 19 student artists featured in this exhibition represent 11 different public and private schools in the area.

The theme of “Voice” was chosen to give students an opportunity to let their voices be heard as it applies to issues concerning them today. They were invited to share in the cultural, social, and political discourse of our nation in the safe space of the Youth Council exhibition walls. The works submitted explored activism, cultural identity, gender ideals, politics, fear of violence in schools, and more. These are the issues that concern the youth today and they Youth Council is proud to provide students with a platform to share their voices with the community.
“This connects to the theme because beauty standards and have a harmful impact on the self esteem of people. This is prevalent in today’s technological culture, where teenagers are presented with idealized views of beauty which influences their own perception of what is accepted as beautiful.

This problem causes a lot of the youth experience a drop in self esteem due to the nature of social media.

I’m passionate about creating self-confidence, especially in young women, who are more susceptible to the follies of social media”

- Mya Arong, Artist
Mac is an artist with a passion for both 2-D studio art and traditional darkroom film photography. She has a passion for preservation of marine life and education about sharks. However, she also involves herself in conversations for human rights such as LGBT+ rights, gun violence, civil rights, and climate change.

“The March For Our Lives in Tampa brought together a diverse community varying in age, race, political affiliation, etc. to address the rampant issue of gun violence. Many protesters made signs encouraging each other to love, come together, and vote.

- Mackenzie “Mac” Davis, Artist
DILUTED IDENTITY
BY MADISSEN DERISE
Blake High School, 12th Grade
Madissen is a self-made business owner, occupying two international businesses which led her to teach herself Japanese and Mandarin Chinese, all the way to fluency. Growing up as a twin, Madissen always wanted to stand out independently and strived high, even on the path to graduate high school as a junior. She uses her language skills to communicate with her foreign employees and company relations. Through these interactions, she developed an understanding of the ‘other side’ of political issues. This has become a theme for most of her photography. Madissen spends a lot of time at the Buddhist Temple, where she is inspired to always look into the light and speak for those who can’t.

“My piece introduces three girls, standing together in Japanese wear, their faces erased as being in America has made them realize they aren’t represented and are merely figures used for modeling and fashion - simply for the clothes they are wearing. Without a role model who ‘looks like them’ and ‘talks like them,’ their identity has been erased and the pride of their culture is merely an empty shell that is held together by their tightly bound kimonos and yukatas.”

- Madissen Derise, Artist
Madison is currently a junior in the Visual Arts department at Blake High School in the magnet program. She enjoys working with all mediums as an outlet to speak about the modern American society and religion from a teenage perspective. She loves studying art history and finds inspiration in many Renaissance and critical contemporary artists, and her friends as well.

“My piece takes on a critical view of American culture. The past few years, the number of mass shootings as well as police brutality towards people of color have been surging through the roof. This piece is a direct symbol of how I view the current school shooting problem as well as the Black Lives Matter movement. I used over 100 plastic babies and painted them black to emphasize the racial discrimination and large parties of lives lost to this. It is also a symbol of youth and how seeing these horrific events affect the minds of young people like me.”

- Madison Edelman, Artist
“My piece was influenced by Michelangelo's 'The Creation of Adam' but with a modern take. I chose to focus on the amount of consumption in which we as Americans partake. Our culture is focused on consumption and with new corporations providing quick and dishonest service, as well as the increasing population placing wants over needs, it is a growing problem in society. While much of this is involuntary by individuals, our economy has placed reliance on this hierarchy of goods. I chose to represent that through a plaster molding of hands reaching up towards and surrounded by, empty food containers. It was photographed inside of a McDonalds and is supposed to show how this has become the new American family's standard.”

- Madison Edelman, Artist
Ayat Hasan started drawing since she held a crayon. Ever since then she was inspired to find ways to improve her art. She also did taekwondo for nine years, in which she holds a black belt and teaching certificate. After getting a black belt she took a break and spent more time trying different medias of art, such as sculpture, mural painting, and graphic design, but sketching and drawing has always stuck with her.

“You see a an arm and hand covered with vines and flowers. The flowers and vines are supposed to represent life. Flowers showing the beauty of life and the vines that have horns represent the hardship of life and struggles we went through. The vine’s thorns create cuts and leaves scars on the arm and hand showing that sometime the struggles push us to harm our selves. But flowers grow with in the scars and cuts going with the Japanese idea of fixing broken bowls with gold meaning that your flaws are beautiful. The hand reaches out for a huge flower and the bottom of the canvas. The huge flower represents the perfect life everyone reaches for, but the flower is covered by thorny vines. Showing that reaching for our perfect life bring hardships along with it. The vines also wrap around the hand as if clinging to it, showing even though we go through hardships we try clinging to life to the very last minute.”

- Ayat Hasan, Artist
REACH FOR THE STARS
BY MARTIN LEON
Hillsborough High School, 9th Grade

Martin Leon is 14 years old and a 9th grader at Hillsborough High School. He has been making sketches for the past 5 or 6 years and has recently picked up photography as a hobby. Martin has also been playing music for about 8 years, playing piano since 1st grade and picking up the cello in 6th.

“Painted on the front and back of the hand are two Cherokee Indian symbols. The first, on the front of the hand, is a symbol for freedom. The second is an altered version of a Cherokee symbol for hope. The symbols I painted representing hope and freedom don’t just represent themselves but the hope I feel that someday I will have the full freedom to use my voice to have a positive impact that reaches further than just those who I speak to directly. The stars painted on the fingers are to be the hopes and successes every one hopes to have in their life. Personally, all these are meant to represent how I hope to be able to use my voice to its fullest and make a positive change in the world whether it is to a large group or just to individual people.”

- Martin Leon, Artist
TRUE STRENGTH
BY MEI LEW
Bell Creek Academy, 12th Grade
Marianne "Mei" Lew is an artist of Chinese descent, and the first child of her family to be born in America. Her art is currently found on her Instagram page titled Honey & Hell Art.

“This piece gains its namesake from a quote from Vincent Van Gogh: ‘Love many things, for therein lies true strength...’ In our diverse world, we see a lot of division due to cultural intolerance. The focus of “True Strength” is first and foremost love and acceptance. For without love of each other and understanding of one’s differences, there is only weakness and hate.

In my opinion, our current Administration has been feeding the flames of racism and cultural intolerance since Trump first came in the running. While the Trump Administration provokes other problematic ideals, the issue of racism seems to be at the forefront of it. I see this as a platform to promote acceptance across cultures, so that someone can see the beauty and complexity of love and tolerance.

The issue of racism is very personal to me. My mom comes from Suriname, a third world country in South America, and my dad comes from Jamaica, but we are all of Chinese descent. My background is diverse and I’m extremely proud of it, though the issues we are facing today in such a diverse country is heartbreaking. I’m really glad I have the opportunity to express not only my feelings on this subject, but also a piece of my history and philosophy.”

- Mei Lew, Artist
Alex Paglierli, a junior at Tampa Prep, enjoys drawing and painting, specifically the use of digital art as a medium. Alex is in theatre, plays Varsity Tennis, is in Chamber Chorus, and is on Student Council. She loves to read and very much loves movies.

“‘Vibrant Silence’ is a piece that means very much to me in the fact that it represents the silencing of creativity and free thought in modern culture. The vibrancy of color in the background represents how creativity is ignored and dismissed in today’s society. The piece of tape over the models mouth represents today’s culture and how people tend to undermine and disregard creativity and art.”

- Alex Paglierli, Artist
AMERICA’S VIBRANT COLORS
BY ALEXANDRIA RUFFIN
Durant High School, 9th Grade

Alexandria is a freshman bass player in the Durant concert orchestra and acts in drama club. In her past time, she works on her photography and editing skills.

“Through my photographs, I like to show how things can be altered based on my mood, my thoughts and my interactions.

This plant signifies growth while learning. I altered the color of the plant to show the darkness that the American citizens once experienced because of their differences. I enhanced the color of the plant to not only define the diversity of our country, but to also show the brightness and colorful range of our people.”

- Alexandria Ruffin, Artist
Elizabeth is currently a senior at Berkeley Prep. During her time at school, she is a member of Varsity Cheerleading and is the photo editor of her school’s yearbook. Outside of school, Elizabeth is very passionate about photography, always having a camera around her neck. She is also very passionate about dance, after being a competitive dancer for the past decade of her life. Elizabeth hopes to pursue a creative career after all of her schooling is done.

“There are too many voices. This photo was taken on a longer exposure allowing for more movement to come through the lens creating the ghosting effect. This effect allows for multiple things to happen at the same time. In this case my model was moving and so were the lights. I believe that this connects to the theme because there are too many voices going on in the photo. Not only are there voices in her head, but there are outside voices in her surroundings (the blurry lights). The photo represents too many voices going on in the models life and her just resonating with them.”

- Elizabeth Sage, Artist
Mary Schneider is a sophomore dedicated to mastering bagpipes and the saxophone. She enjoys expressing herself in other forms, such as photography, as well, despite a complete lack of official training.

“One of the most notable staples of American culture is the idea of the American Dream, with a white picket fence, 2.6 kids and so on. Per my belief, there is not a single person who has achieved this impossible dream. Life is not perfect. It can never be perfect. However, it is beautiful and tragic and magical and everything in between. Often, we get so wrapped up in being perfect...we forget to be ourselves. This image is surrounded by darkness. What sort of color will you fill it with?”

- Mary Schneider, Artist
VOICES
BY ROBBIE SHAFFER
Jesuit High School, 12th Grade

Robbie Shaffer is a senior artist at Jesuit High School and works in the area of photo realism. This piece is a change from his photo realistic style and a shift to graphic design.

“In today’s world, there is a misunderstanding of the beauty in a person. This piece breaks down to the basics in the idea that beauty lies in the human eye. Along with nature, beauty and image are enhanced to the true ideals in regard to life.”

- Robbie Shaffer, Artist
“This piece delves into the conflicting ideas of my cultural identity. I am a quarter Korean, my grandmother having immigrated from South Korea many years ago to start a family. I grew up with certain aspects of the culture prominent in my upbringing, and my grandmother played an integral part of my childhood. Yet, I don’t feel like I have the right to call myself such. I have always been told, “You don’t look Asian.” “You don’t sound Asian.” and, from my mother, “Why would you call yourself Asian? You’re not a minority.” Does the fact that I am only 25% Korean make me unable to identify with the culture? Do I sound pretentious when I call myself as such, only attempting to make myself more interesting? Do I invalidate other, full-blooded Asian Americans by doing this? All of these questions I explore in this piece, as my search for an answer continues on.”

- Payton Sherer, Artist
"My piece, Black Sheep, aligns with civic discourse as I am a proponent of the social issue of animal rights. My bag was created using all imitation materials, and the title of the work reflects my choice to use alternative materials."

- Erin Sullivan, Artist

Erin is a senior at Tampa Prep. She is a very creative person who has a passion for making handbags.
Jolie is a self taught artist who is a junior from Robinson High School and from a young age, she had always shown a high interest in art and prefers watercolors and digital as mediums.

“The purpose behind my artwork was to provide a visual representation on depression and what it feels like to live with depression. I wanted to bring to light on how depression is like an ocean, where on the surface, everything looks perfectly fine, but underneath it all, in the depths of the ocean, there is an unknown darkness that we cannot get rid of.”

- Jolie Truong-Nguyen, Artist
Always on the go, junior Hope Urbanovsky keeps a camera within arms reach to capture the moment. Photography has always sparked a passion for Hope, and she loves to challenge herself to develop new imagery.

“Seeing Light shows how American society is evolving to be inclusive of all individuals, no matter their background, and also illustrates that people can now more openly be themselves.”

- Hope Urbanovsky, Artist
Natalie is a junior at HB Plant High School where she enjoys participating in the chorus, yearbook, youth in government, and executive board. Natalie spends her free time by hanging out with her friends, re-watching *The Office*, and occasionally questioning moral philosophy.

“In *The Forgotten Face* the clear argument of the photo is that although America is a prosperous/progressive country, there are still groups of people systematically oppressed and “forgotten” by the government that was meant to protect them. The subject - a young African American boy - represents the struggle that black youth combat when it comes to issues like police brutality and gun violence. The boy’s face, juxtaposed with the classically patriotic colors, ironically expresses the ignorance most of America has toward these social issues. Everything is seemingly vibrant and good on the surface, but when the viewer looks closer at the subject’s expression and demeanor, it is clear that something isn’t right.

This photograph articulately expresses the power and need for not only social justice, but also the importance of looking past the surface and at the world around you. It’s important to ensure that our generation considers who is paying the price for their prosperity, and what we need to change when it’s our turn to take care of the world, and what we can change right now.”

-Natalie Ulm, Artist
“I have always avoided assigning a direct gender to the people in my pieces. There is a deep and profound beauty in androgyny because of how universal it is. In my piece, I have juxtaposed both feminine and masculine features together to create a piece that is uniquely ubiquitous. I have drawn great inspiration from fashion magazines from Japan as well as drawing inspiration from many different gender movements. My work is a reflection of the unparalleled freedom the youth of America experiences today in regards to expression of gender fluidity. When I was young, I thought the word that best described me was “tom boy”. However, that word did not fully encapsulate who I was. I still liked things that were deemed feminine like fairies, princesses, and mermaids, but I also enjoyed things that were deemed masculine like skateboarding, playing with hot wheels, and roughhousing with my friends. I always felt like the masculine part of me overwhelmed anything feminine about me. I felt awkward for most of my childhood. I was too girly for the boys and too boyish for the girls. But as the years went by and society started to change, I realized that being a tom boy was only one aspect of me. There were thousands of people out in the world who enjoyed both sides of the spectrum. In this modern day and age, people should be allowed to express themselves more freely. Your voice should not be invalidated because of your gender.”

- Laura Wu, Artist

Laura Wu is a senior in the IB Program at King High School. She hopes to one day become a graphic novelist and move to Montana to live in the mountains.
WHO ARE WE?
BY DANYA YOUSEF
American Youth Academy, 11th Grade

“This piece resembles the entire concept of lost identity and humans questioning who they truly are. The concept of an identity crisis and not knowing where one comes from or a person’s origin.

As humans, being lost is a constant feeling, and that is what the piece is saying. But, after searching for a long time, a person is eventually found, and the colors in the piece represent the different aspects and origins of the person.

It is also showing that it is okay to not know who you are and to not listen to what society says to be. A person should just be their self.”

- Danya Yousef, Artist

Danya Yousef is a junior IB student at a private school called American Youth Academy. She enjoys spending her time with friends, doing different forms of art, singing, and more. She also enjoys various sports including basketball, soccer, and swimming. She loves taking on leadership roles and spending her weekends volunteering for various events.
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