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Visual arts Exhibition Student D (HL)

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Curatorial Rationale

During IB Art, I learnt to fuse art with issues relating to social justice. My final outcomes are pieces of criticism that invite viewers to reflect on the flaws of our educational paradigm. My thematic focus has evolved enormously. I started out exploring simply the theme of knowledge. I stayed within my comfort zone in terms of media and subject matter. When I finally put the aesthetics and meaning of my art on the same level and modified my theme, I opened myself up to opportunities afforded by modern media, subject matter and techniques. I wanted my works to be not mere static representations of ideas, but to invite discussions of modern social issues.

I began paying more attention to the cultural and historical significance of the concept, which also marked my transition in thematic focus, in “Judgment of Fortune,” which puts a modern twist on the myth of the Judgment of Paris and aims to criticize the disparities in access to education. I started using more techniques in each painting. I looked at other depictions of the judgment of Paris by artists like Anton Raphael Mengs, Marcantonio Raimond, Enrique S Lombardo and Peter P Rubens. They use visual weight and tone to draw your eye to particular parts of the composition, with somber colors and bright lighting. In my painting, the baby clasping the apple (a common symbol of knowledge) is brightly lit and is proportionally larger than the other two figures, who symbolize the way that girls and poor children around the world are denied education.

My works began gaining a more modern and personal outlook. I broke out of my self-imposed limitations to traditional media and inspirations later on, when I experimented with a completely different style with “Uniformed” and “Yin-Yang of Cerebral Development,” a risk that I needed to take to discover the full potential of my art. I tried a technique inspired by Yosman Botero, who creates 3D drawings with layers of glass and acrylic paint. The stories of his pieces always hint at surrealism, and use simple and somber colors to help minimize the sense of absurdity. The way the paint is layer gives the pieces depth and a sense of movement and, in “Uniformed” it helped to show just how deeply the sense of indoctrination in Vietnamese education penetrates.

Curatorial Rationale

Later on, I really delved into personal connections with my concepts, which is why I feel most strongly about my later works, including “Anatomy of a Graduate,” a self-portrait. I wanted to use modern iconography to express my resentment of the way my school career has tried to mould me and I settled on Tetris, a game that requires you to slot blocks together exactly. The colors become less saturated to show the way that the school system drives critical thinking, individuality and joy at learning away.

In Or Out Of Hand 1 and 2 are related pieces discussing two types of lack of education: people who want it and can't get access to it, and people who have access but waste it. Piece number 1 is done in sgraffito, by applying a surface of one color onto a surface of a contrasting color and scratching the top surface off to make the image. It gives a primitive and unfinished look to the piece, reflecting the way the girl portrayed is not allowed to become educated and get out of poverty. The second piece is in a very fine tipped pen, because I wanted the background to feel like the person was surrounded by information, and using a very fine line allowed me to fit more marks on the page. The space in front of the person is blank because they are not taking advantage of what they have.

Although I revisited more traditional media, my concepts maintained their characteristic modern connections. My foremost goal with this exhibition is to deliver a dynamic body of work that is relevant to the modern viewer.

Word count: 660

Exhibition Photograph 1



Exhibition Photograph 2



Lucifer

Earthenware clay

30x20x45cm

Artwork 1



This is my interpretation of Lucifer's fall from grace, influenced by the sculpture of Philippe Faraut, Frankenstein by Mary Shelley and Milton's Paradise Lost.

Yin-yang of cerebral development

Vitreous paint on plexiglass with watercolour on paper

31x31x1cm

Artwork 2



This piece discusses the loss of creativity as a person progresses through an education system that wants to produce workers rather than artists. The people are placed within an outline of a human skull, in the position of the brain.

Uniformed

Acrylic paint on plexiglass

21x21x1cm

Artwork 3



This is an expression of how the Vietnamese education system, with its emphasis on memorisation and testing, reduces individuality and critical thinking.

Three corrupted rats
Pencil and watercolour
56x76cm

Artwork 4



I used rats, creatures that represent small and cowardly characters in Vietnam, to depict corruption in the education sector, in a version of the Three Wise Monkeys pictorial maxim.

Futures for sale

Photograph 1

Watercolor and acrylic on paper, in wooden and glass case

65x50x14cm

Artwork 5



I am going to attend college in the US and have become aware that the higher education there has become about brand names, price tags and commercialisation.

Futures for sale

Additional Photograph 1



Anatomy of a graduate

Watercolour

56x76cm

Artwork 6



This is a self-portrait showing how your progression through the school system starts to fit you into the mould everyone's made of their expectations for you.

Death, enlightenment and other things

Acrylic on canvas

45x60cm

Artwork 7



Vanitas was a still-life genre from Flanders and the Netherlands which rose to prominence in the 16th and 17th century. These are symbolic portrayals of different kinds of knowledge.

Judgement of fortune
Acrylic on canvas
100x120cm

Artwork 8



Inspired by Renaissance and Baroque portrayals of the Judgement of Paris, this piece is about the arbitrary, erratic and disparate access to education available around the world.

In or out of hand? #1
Scratchboard (sgraffito)
36x28cm

Artwork 9



This piece and the next are sister pieces depicting a dichotomy of ignorance: people who are unable to access education and people who wilfully choose not to take advantage of it.

In or out of hand? #2

Micron pen on gloss paper

36x28cm

Artwork 10



This piece and the previous one are sister pieces depicting a dichotomy of ignorance: people who are unable to access education and people who wilfully choose not to take advantage of it.

In or out of hand? #2

Additional Photograph 1





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