

Throughout my whole IB visual arts experience, I was set on showing people the injustices of the world through my art. I wanted my art to evoke a desire for change in today's world for the better. My artworks have had a recurring theme of conflict, whether it was political or self-centered. In many of my pieces, I used acrylic paint, which resulted in some struggles when it came to blending or mixing the colors properly to create the desired effect. Acrylic paints required me to undergo deep research to broaden my understandings. I learned various painting techniques through Youtube and my peers that I later on incorporated into my pieces. I experimented with acrylic paints before starting actual pieces in order to see what I could achieve successfully and what wouldn't work.

In my piece, *Steer Me Wrong*, I was heavily inspired by Roy Lichtenstein's *In the Car*. In Lichtenstein's painting, a man and a woman are the main subjects of the painting. Drawing on my concern about the current state of politics and Donald Trump's presidency, I felt that Lichtenstein would be an excellent fit, due to his relationship with pop culture. I decided to represent Donald Trump's presidency through Lichtenstein's iconic painting. From the extensive research I had done on Lichtenstein's art style, I learned that his techniques included altering an original piece in order for it to fit in with pop culture.

Common themes in my artworks are conflict and inner turmoil. As an artist, I pull inspiration from everyday life. I believe that art is a medium that allows people to speak out against injustices when other people either can't or won't. Through my artwork, I hoped to bring awareness about controversial topics to my audience. For example, in *Run Mickey!*, I helped visualize animal testing issue in the U.S. In *The True Reality*, I depicted a Syrian woman looking at an airstrike of her hometown. In *Steer Me Wrong*, I spoke out against Trump's presidency. In *Cara de Nopal*, I visualized an old common Mexican saying and used it to promote pride for one's culture and roots. I have explained that *cara de nopal* literally translates to "cactus face" and how it was used to express the obvious Mexican roots of an individual. Often times, I have heard about people being ashamed of their culture, and when you're a minority, you seem to have more reasons to be ashamed and embarrassed.

In my art exhibition, I showcased 11 of my best artworks that I then divided into two categories: world and personal conflict. The first part of my exhibition features world issues and serves as an introduction since most viewers are familiar with them already. I feel I have a personal connection to many of the situations that are depicted in my work because they have been essential in shaping me into the person I am today. In order to make my exhibition more interactive and aesthetically pleasing, I adjusted the lighting on the paintings that featured world issues to be bright to emphasize their importance and create feelings of alertness within the audience. For my pieces that featured my personal conflicts, I dimmed the lights to become a soft orangish color to symbolize my "dark" times and create a feeling of tranquility within my audience.

Throughout my exhibition, I strove for great craftsmanship and creativity above all else. I wanted my exhibit to be memorable and something astoundingly unique. In setting up for my exhibition, I realized that the exhibition is just as important as the artwork itself. I wanted to present my work in a way that would persuade people to become more open-minded and to engulf them in feelings of sympathy, sadness, and determination.

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