

School of the Arts  
Visual Arts Department  
February 2021

Senior Show Group 1:

***IDENTITY***

**Artist Statements by:**

Charlese B.

Lorelei B.

Josh G.

Norah H.

Janaya J.

Dariel R. R.

Holly R.

Jaelin V.

**Charlese B.**  
**Artist Statement**

Art is defined as “the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination.” I see art as a visual representation of what goes on in my brain. Creating art allows the people who can’t see inside my brain an idea of what goes on up there. I like art for the mere fact that it can be anything; there are never really any limitations in art. I enjoy making art to see the reactions of those around me. I like seeing the facial expressions that form on peoples’ faces when looking at my art. To me art is the key to a different world, a world where tigers can be pink and people are green. Art allows your imagination to become a reality.

Creating my art is a process: some thinking, sketching, A LOT of erasing, and more sketching. I prefer to make 3D art because I feel as though to truly grasp a concept, you should be able to not only see it but to touch it. Most of my art was made with acrylic paints and canvas or clay. I just started using acrylics and canvas because it’s all I had accessible at the time. I’ve always enjoyed being able to mold and play with the clay while seeing the idea in your head become real. Most of my ideas come from my brain, but if I’m in a bit of a rut I find inspiration through Pinterest. I don’t really have any exact influences, I go based on maybe my mood for that day, or maybe something I’ve seen on TV that I thought was pretty cool.

Most of my pieces in this show were either created my senior year or during the summer before. All except my tomato animation, I chose this animation I created in 9th grade because it was my very first time working in animation and I wanted others to see what I was able to do with little to no previous knowledge. When I first started at SOTA, drawing and painting was never really my thing, I hated it. But as I’ve grown throughout my high school years, I realized I needed to at least give it a try. Also, some of the photographs I took were during my first year of photography and I’m pretty proud of the outcomes.

Over the years I’ve learned that it's okay to be a one trick pony. You don’t have to be good at all the arts as long as you’re comfortable with just one. Actually, I plan to go into the medical field instead of pursuing a career in Visual Arts. I would incorporate art as a way to connect with my younger patients, I would use it as a way for them to communicate with me without using words. Maybe in the future I’ll decide to pursue another degree in the Visual Arts field and use it to educate younger children into the joys of being an artist.

**Lorelei B.**  
**Artist Statement**

To me, art is about experimentation and expressing my thought process visually. This can appear in subtle forms such as what I choose to highlight for detail, relating to everyday observations and imagination, or it can be seen as a clearer insight into my passions. I am drawn to creating art because it gives me the freedom to design scenes from my perspective, and scenes that I don't physically experience, but mentally picture for myself and others to view.

A year ago, I would have said that I primarily created art using a pencil and some digital experience I had, but over the course of quarantine I was exposed to more media than ever before. More specifically, I gained experience and interest in painting and digital design while working with the collaborative programs Roc Paint and Peculiar Asphalt. With these programs, I was introduced to different artistic environments with inspiration from fellow artists and mentors, on top of what I gained from being a visual artist at School of the Arts in classes of talented peers and teachers. I have always valued peer influence and tried to soak up as much as I could from art class at school, so when school became remote I didn't have the social aspects of art making that I was used to. Roc Paint and Peculiar Asphalt, while Roc Paint was virtual for the end of the season, pushed me to grow as an individual and as a team member while the structure of school was lost.

Thinking back, I have improved as an artist mostly in the past year, which is hard to believe considering every other part of me has felt so lost during so much change. This goes to show that art is my true outlet even when I can't seem to find motivation. As I experimented, and I began to appreciate art in many more ways that were overlooked before quarantine. I was able to get a better understanding of my passion and dreams of becoming an animator and/or a digital artist in the future.

I have enjoyed exploring digital work and creating my own, and I have gained a greater appreciation for concept artists and animators. I plan to go to college and become an artist for others to feel inspired by, and join yet another environment where I can have a role in a field and a purpose in a team as I have in high school and our city's youth programs.

**Josh G.**  
**Artist Statement**

I create because I have something in me that I need to get out; it feels as though it's killing me slowly, crushing me. This pressure I feel can become so strong at times that I feel like I can only rest once it's dealt with. This is something I've experienced for as long as I can remember. I grew up in an artistic household, both of my parents are creative people so even at a young age I was always making something, always appreciating the beauty in creation.

When it comes to why I make art, it is as if there are messages that can be portrayed in a visual medium that can't be expressed any other way. What I love most about art is how it acts as proof behind our strengths as human beings. Everyone is given a mind capable of amazing things, capable of making things that might not have ever existed before, thus showing one of, if not the strongest, aspect of humanity: our creativity.

Most often I start with a really basic thumbnail sketch and sometimes not even that, just notes on what I was thinking about that day. Then, after I have a strong enough mental image of what I want I start sketching out on canvas, wood, or a wall that I'm working on. From there, I usually spend the next few weeks working on a few different paintings or projects I've started at once until I find one I feel most comfortable with for that day. I like to make art that is impactful without necessarily needing a written message to go along with it. Once I feel I've made something that's striking enough then I begin to tell its story, but more often than not, I leave my work up for individuals to interpret themselves.

I use many different mediums and try to use what's best for a specific effect or timeline for a project. If it's something I want to have strong bold colors with minimal blending, I use acrylics. If I want something that looks more organic, I use oils. With murals, I'm using either spray paint or house paint. I almost always start with a charcoal, pencil, or pastel sketch because they're all such immediate mediums.

I take inspiration from as many aspects of my life and the world around me as possible. There are so many artists I look up to all for their different abilities whether that be their skill, business skills, or ability to reflect their world around them. I also take a lot of inspiration from my environment. I want to create something that seems familiar to the people who view it, and I feel the best way to do that is by emulating nature in art. More often than not, I try to make things that seem surreal yet recognizable, a reflection of the mental struggles I, like many people, face day to day.

My biggest goal when it comes to art is to keep it as the focus of my life for the rest of my life. I want to create something that not only people enjoy or look to for inspiration or comfort, but also something that has a lasting impact on the world moving forward. Although I may not be immortal, I feel as though my messages are preserved in paint, my biggest drive is to create something worth preserving.

As I've progressed, my technical skill has improved substantially since I first decided to become an artist. What I value most is how I've learned what art means to me: that being an avenue to be heard, and an avenue to make a difference in the world no matter how small. Now that I have a stronger understanding of how much creativity influences my life, I know that it's something I want to do for as long as possible. I plan on continuing to work as an artist's apprentice, along with continuing my education in art to become the best I can be. I see art as nothing short of the focal point of my life, and who I am as a person, and I doubt it's something I'll stop creating any time soon.

**Norah H.**  
**Artist Statement**

I create art to learn; to learn about myself, about others, about what the world is made of, and how I feel about it. Each art piece is a journey; it never turns out exactly like I imagined it when it came into my head. In fact, I think it would be disappointing if it did because that would mean I learned nothing as I created it, and then what would be the point of it? I am a student after all, and I hope I never stop being a student, even as I graduate and move on to other things. I think that's what art is all about. Learning from the artist, even if the artist is you.

My favorite art to create is character design. I like to make people who aren't real but feel like they could be in some world, real or fantasy. How much can you tell from a person by the colors they choose to dress in, the items they carry on their person, the shoes they wear? I have created characters in many mediums; digital canvas, real canvas, pencil and paper, colored markers, and even dolls with yarn hair and tiny but real clothing. Sometimes it doesn't have a deep meaning, sometimes it does, but it always has a story.

That being said, I take my inspiration from stories. I love graphic novels and non-graphic novels, podcasts and music, faerie tales and cartoons, and I love even more to represent that love in visual form. My mom is a librarian, so I was raised on books and stories, and I think that's part of where my overactive imagination comes from. My head is so full of stories and ideas that it had to spill out eventually.

The biggest thing I've learned is to let a project take my hand and lead me, to not get hung up on the little details, not to mention an arsenal of technical skills to help me get where it wants me to go. Here's another thing I learned, if indirectly, from my experience as a student of the visual arts: the greatest character I will ever design is me, and the greatest story I can ever tell is my own life.

**Janaya J.**  
**Artist Statement**

My name is Janaya Jackson, a Senior Visual Arts Major at School of the Arts. I officially became a Visual Arts major in Grade 11. I've always been an artist, for as long as I could remember. I create art because I love it and I use it to get ideas out of my head.

It is difficult for me to explain why I like making art. I guess it just feels right like I'm supposed to make art. I'm not forced to make art. I want to make art. Art is a part of my life and I can't imagine myself not doing it. If I was never able to create art, I would feel like a part of my life was taken away from me. Art is precious to me; it's part of me and always will be.

Two of the many things that inspires me to make art is anime and manga. I really like Japanese culture and it has influenced my art style heavily. I create art based on things I see, imagine, and dream and based on other peoples' art that I see. I make art about a lot of different things. I have an open and diverse selection of art that I make.

Art has helped me learn how to express myself and be creative. I plan on continuing to make art throughout my life. This is a goal of mine. I hope to someday open up my own animation studio and create animations and comic books. I want to tell as many of the stories I have in my head as possible.

**Dariel R. R.**  
**Artist Statement**

I create art as both a way to express myself and a way to challenge myself. I find it both to be entertaining and exciting when I find a way to create something spectacular in 3D or when i'm able to accurately shade something to make it seem realistic. To me art is a potential future and a way to escape whenever I need it.

I tend to dip my toes into many different forms of art. I originally started in traditional pencil art, ink art and then digital art, like vector art which eventually evolved into creating digital 3D environments and animations. My favourite type of medium so far is 3D digital art as I'm constantly learning something new or have to be creative with how I make it. I make my digital 3D art in Blender by first doing some basic modeling and depending on the project I may use external assistance like MakeHuman where I can easily make human models. After the modeling I tend to pose and rig my scenes with a website called Mixamo which allows me to easily and quickly animate a character. Once everything is in position, I texture the models using an image map, a normal map, and occasionally a glossy map depending on the textures. After my textures are properly made and any issues are dealt with, I move on to lighting to give my scene a sense of atmosphere. After a few tests, I add more to the scene until I am happy with it and then move on to the post-processing.

My main inspiration for my art is videogames, like Cyberpunk 2077 and PT, and other artists like Zdzislaw Beksinski. I draw a lot of my inspiration from games like PT due to its rich atmosphere and realistic feeling which I love and try to have in each of my pieces because of the emotions that they tend to have on gamers.

I have learned how to make nearly photoreal scenes in Blender. I wish to use my skills in Blender to make video games which help push the medium, but also to achieve true photorealism in my pieces.

## **Holly R.**

### **Artist Statement**

Art for me ranges from being a stress reliever to a hobby that I take part in from time to time. When it comes to creating, I really love the way art is so open and freeing; there is so much that you can create and it's also so daunting at the same time. When I create I tend to go towards more darker pieces and there is no real reason behind why this is. I've just always been drawn to darker things and I like the way they look. Ever since I was little I've always been drawn to art and I love seeing what others can create; something about it is so inspiring and just magical.

I focus more on portraits than anything else, I really love drawing other people's features because everyone's face is so different and unique. These portraits tend to focus on those that inspire me and who I look up to. I tend to find reference photos of those that I want to draw, or pictures of people that I'm really drawn to and would like to try and capture. When I draw these portraits they tend to be more on the realistic side, but I like to try and branch out and draw them in my own odd style. I tend to mainly use pencil when it comes to making art, but I've experimented with and now really enjoy using watercolor.

My influences tend to come from other artists works and what inspires me to create is my own interests. These include characters that I'm drawn to in TV shows that I enjoy, as well as members of bands who I really love. I either connect to the characters or the music created by these band members, and this really helps me get through tough times. As I've continued to create, I've learned to let go a little and draw what feels right to me, although I still struggle when it comes to confidence in my work. I'm not sure what the future holds for me, but I know that I will always continue to create.

**Jaelin V.**  
**Artist Statement**

I believe that art is the expression of the soul. Instead of using art as a tool to express lessons that I've learned, I create art to learn more about myself.

When I begin creating, the first thing I ask myself is what I want, or need to see. This could be a political theme, color scheme, facial feature, or article of clothing that I'm compelled to draw. From there, the process becomes purely intuitive. Once I have an idea of what I'm going to create already in my head, I begin to let my subconscious take the wheel. During this time I decide how I want to mark the page and lay out the line-work. Depending on what style I'm in the mood for I either go bold and messy, or light and clean. Usually I opt for a bold and messy look because I find it draws the eye in. Once the first step is completed I move on to experimenting with color and medium.

Since my goal is to learn more about myself with every work I create, experimenting is the most eye opening part of the artistic experience for me. Through experimentation I am able to broaden my horizon, learn how materials work together, and develop techniques that can help me advance on my creative journey. After materials are chosen I plan which medium should be used when and where to prevent difficulties later on. Next I move on to the coloring process. This step varies with every work I create even when I use the same medium.

My medium of choice is often colored pencils. I find that with colored pencils I can get away with using other materials, but on the other hand the mechanical power, time and layering that comes with colored pencils makes using them difficult. Because I have a hard time maintaining consistent saturation and texture when using colored pencils, each time I color a piece I develop a new strategy. Once the coloring is complete I highlight with gel pens and touch up shadows; from there my work is complete.

To me, my art is a tool to push the boundaries of my mind and learn more about myself.