

Curatorial and Artist Intention Statements of SABRINA SABOYA

For her IB Visual Arts Exhibition

CURATORIAL

Due to COVID-19 our school shut down and our exhibition was cancelled. I set my exhibitions virtually. The artworks were placed in a pre planned order as I worked on the Kunstmatrix platform.

Humans coexist with animals and plants but due to our activities, this balance is disrupted, leaving Earth in urgent threat. Many species are close to extinction. Pollution is everywhere. Oceans are full of plastic, debris and oil spills. Forests are diminished. Since I was very young, I have been conscious about the environment and animals in particular. I knew I had to fight for the voiceless. I stopped eating red meat when I was eight years old and became vegan at thirteen. I convinced my family to go vegetarian by educating them through brutal videos, showing the negative effects our actions cause. Seeing these catastrophic acts took a very big toll on me; I knew I wanted to make a change. Every piece in this exhibition shows my concern relating to the notions above. I not only feel passionate about my work, but I am able to use this media as a platform to raise awareness to this leading problem in our world today.

My body of work consists of a range of media and techniques including drawings, paintings, printmaking, sculptures, digital photographs and mixed media pieces. My work is viewed from left to right. I have works that include my own image as I make my theme personal, artworks showing empathy towards animals by demonstrating them in distress, polluted water, butchered trees and animals getting slaughtered. All these notions are threads that fall under the same vicious cycle of a ruined ecosystem.

Plastic Refraction introduces the exhibition, depicting me trying to observe the world through plastic refractions. I seem unhappy with the obstacles that prevent me from doing that. I carry on with *Asphyxia*, portraying me intertwined with a seal/turtle, trying to gasp for air as we suffocate in plastic. This collage of destroyed acetone photos (a toxic chemical), is placed there to emphasize pain and destruction that will be experienced throughout the rest of the exhibition. It is a way to warn the viewers of what will follow.

Coming after, there is a similar-themed work placed on the floor. It depicts me as another *Ophelia*. I want the audience to physically look down at me suffocating. It is created from a structure that has different levels, the pansies painted on plexiglass and the images underneath it. It reinforces issues that need to become transparent to the public, since the plexiglas is see-through.

The mixed media sculpture *Hollow Gasps* stands almost in the middle of the exhibition. It depicts a trapped woman, screaming in agony as she cannot escape her fate. It is mainly made from plaster strips and wire, which is expressively and disorderly worked. The etching that follows, *A Threatening Thread*, depicts litter, linearly, stretching for miles across the seashore. In the same note, *Under the Burning Water* focuses on oil spills. The beautiful colors are ironically contrasting “ugly” reality. The distorted and messy lines of the etching seem to appear as a continuation of the messy

wire in the previous piece, connecting human loss and emptiness to the littered ocean. *Under the Burning Water* contains multiple lines within the depicted bubbles. There is almost a narrative here: the etching showing the abstracted, big picture of the littered ocean and then the woman in the painting drowning in the polluted water. It is like they enter the etching piece and jump in the water to view the problem at a closer glance. The exhibition continues with *Butchered Tree* and *Slaughtered*, exposing diminished forests due to global warming and animal abuse occurring in slaughterhouses.

The exhibition ends with two digital photography projects. *External Silence* demonstrates the conceptualized magnitude of the problem. The aftermath of environmental harassment will crash back on people. This is evident in the final piece, *Empathy*, depicting myself tied with a fishing net, having a hook pressed in my lips. Through the darkness, I try to see the viewer, wanting to make them understand and empathize with the animals we torture and extinct. I then turn my head away in silence.

Studio Work 1:



Title:	<i>Plastic Refraction</i>
Size:	68x 100 cm
Media:	Variations of charcoals, black conte
Intention Statement (500 characters max):	This artwork aims to bring attention to the plastic waste that is produced by the human race and how severely this non-biodegradable chemical affects nature. I am holding the bottle on my eye to look through the plastic refraction. I am trying to see the world clearly while all the existing obstacles do not allow me to do so.

Studio Work 2:



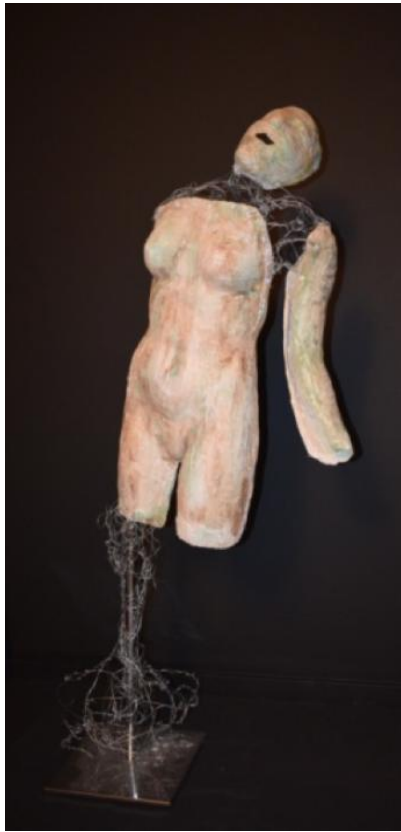
Title:	<i>Asphyxia</i>
Size:	100x100cm
Media:	Mixed media (16 printed photographs, glue, acetone, black acrylic paint) on canvas
Intention Statement (500 characters max):	In this series of photographs, I tried to depict myself in the same situation as the animals when they suffocate with plastic. I gathered the photos (https://theinspirationroom.com/daily/2019/sea-shepherd-raise-plastic-awareness/) of the seal and the turtle from the internet as are recognizable images of animal devastation through ecological annihilation. The destroyed, from acetone, photographs are glued and pasted in specific order to narrate the last crucial moments.

Studio Work 3:



Title:	<i>My Ophelia</i>
Size:	50x100x10 cm (2 pieces 50x50x10cm)
Media:	Mixed media (two printed photographs, wood, screws, plexi-glass, glue, acrylic paints)
Intention Statement (500 characters max):	This artwork is based on Shakespear's Ophelia in <i>Hamlet</i> who committed suicide by drowning while holding pansies. I depict myself in the same position in a mirrored way to echo the agony of dying. Contrastingly, <i>My Ophelia</i> is undergoing plastic suffocation like millions of marine life unfortunately experience. The drifting pansies are painted on the see through surface of plexiglas to expose and contrast the suffering images underneath.

Studio Work 4:



Title:	<i>Hollow Gasps</i>
Size:	160x60x60
Media:	Mixed Media: wire, plaster strips, brown varnish powder, acrylic paint, and liquid plaster (manikin doll to cast the front body)
Intention Statement (500 characters max):	A woman trapped screaming in agony as if she cannot escape from her fate. Her “rusted” body is hollowed and leaning back to bring attention to the emptiness she feels. The pain I was aiming to depict is existential personifying her state of mind and soul in relation to earth's ecological catastrophe. The absence of her legs which are replaced with chaotic wire emphasizes her instability and lack of control.

Studio Work 5:



Title:	<i>A Threatening Thread</i>
Size:	15x20cm
Media:	Oil etching printing inks on paper
Intention Statement (500 characters max):	<i>A Threatening Thread</i> depicts pounds of litter stretching for miles across the seashore. The litters abstracted are transformed in a continuous, trembling line, like an intertwined thread resembling oils that float on water polluting the oceans. I was deeply moved and inspired from the millions of gallons of oil spilled from Deepwater Horizon in the Mexico gulf, killing thousands of marine animals and birds in the last five years.

Studio Work 6:



Title:	<i>Under the Burning Water</i>
Size:	100x70 cm
Media:	Acrylic paints on canvas
Intention Statement (500 characters max):	This work aims to depict a woman drifting into the water after she drowns in order to represent the death and surrendering of nature due to brutal human activity. The colors are reversed to show the chemicals, such as oils and methane that are recklessly dumped or spilled in natural waters, creating devastating damages to the ecosystem. I aimed for a more abstract approach to reveal depth and fragility of emotions.

Studio Work 7:



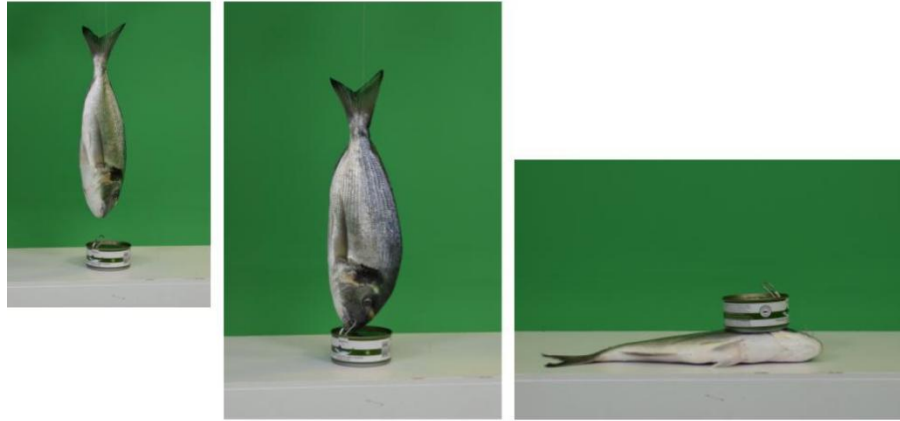
Title:	<i>Butchered Tree</i>
Size:	100x50cm
Media:	Oil paints on canvas
Intention Statement (500 characters max):	For this work I was inspired by “amputated” trees that had huge branches cut off that I saw in a protected forest. This <i>Butchered Tree</i> has fleshy colors, purposefully painted and altered to symbolize blood. It also has connotations of fire and destruction, since this is what pollution, global warming, and reckless behavior does to the natural world.

Studio Work 8:



Title:	<i>Slaughtered</i>
Size:	100x50cm
Media:	Oil paints on canvas
Intention Statement (500 characters max):	Being a vegan for years and seeing animals slaughtered for food consumption is ludicrous to me. My <i>Slaughtered</i> animal is hanged alone in a dark warehouse where at the back there is a door slightly open. The white light of life rushing to come inside contrasts with the lifeless animal. It aims to be an existential piece on the values of humanity.

Studio Work 9:



Title:	<i>External Silence</i>
Size:	61x126cm all together (45x29cm,61x40cm,38x57cm)
Media:	Printed photographs
Intention Statement (500 characters max):	<i>External Silence</i> aims to represent an objective concept, a prediction of what the future will look like if human activities are not modified. Once we have pushed the ecosystem of the world enough and it cannot take the dangers we present to it any longer, it will immediately come crashing down and pose greater dangers to everyone. This is what the last image demonstrates, the problem (the can) crashing on us (the fish).

Studio Work 10:



Title:	<i>Empathy</i>
Size:	100x115cm all together (72x55cm,82x60cm)
Media:	Printed photographs
Intention Statement (500 characters max):	Trying to empathize with fish that get caught with hooks, suffocate and die I tried to partially place myself in this position by distorting my face with fishnet and stabbed my lip with a fish hook. I used my body to protest against violence of humans on marine life.