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Miller Arts Scholars Outcome Report

Minigrant Outcome Report: Oil Painting

With the Miller Art's minigrant funding, I was able to buy all the supplies I needed to create a large-scale oil painting. This has been a project that I had been meaning to accomplish for a while now, and thanks to the grant, I was able to finally go back to my oil realism roots. This project was different than anything I have done in a UVA art class because it was precise, large, and took over a month to complete.

The process began with adobe photo-shop where I inserted a photo from one of my favorite fashion photographers, Sebastian Kim, into a scene of a forest wildfire. This was inspired by the colossal 2018 California wildfires that have finally been contained. These wildfires were the deadliest and most destructive wildfire on record. They lasted for over 5 months, from July to November. After reading many articles and watching countless videos of the tragic scenes and roaring flames, it was important to me to find a photo that might encompass the stirring emotions that were present amongst people fleeing their homes. The woman's face in the painting demonstrated the fear and uncertainty that the California residents that have been affected by the wildfires must be feeling. I chose her because she was looking away, her eyes wandering off into the surrounding flames. Another reason I chose this photo was because of the many layers that were covering her body. Her yellow coat resembles that of a firefighter, she grips at it to shield herself from the flames. She wore leather gloves, a blue shall around her face, and a patterned yellow and black scarf. I purposefully dirtied the coat to create the illusion that she was in the forest.

Using the new Pico projector that I purchased, I was able to draw the image I created on adobe photo-shop onto a 30x30 canvas. Then, I sprayed the canvas with fixative, which protected the pencil from getting smeared off by the paint. Next I began painting—using the Gamblin paint set, I started by mixing Indian yellow and purple to create the tone for my under-layer. I have attached an image of this preliminary step. This step is the foundation of the painting, and is necessary with oil. Then I let the under-layer dry for a few days before I came back in with color.

I started by applying color to the background. I mixed layers of purple, yellow, and pink to create the smoke which floated around the burning trees. Then I started the clothing—I worked my way from outside to in, finishing the wrinkled yellow coat, then working on the silky folded scarf, then lastly, creating the wool blue shawl. Finally, I began her face. The face is always the most difficult and precise part of a portrait. Before this painting, I hadn't painted a portrait in several years. With few shadows, it was challenging to create depth in her face. I spent countless days on the tiny details that this painting entailed. Lastly, I added the flakes and sparks of the background and it was basically complete. However, to me, it could never be finished. I constantly went back and edited the most miniscule details and then the next day went back again. And finally, I decided it was complete.

Thanks to the Miller Arts grant I was able to acquire the materials I needed to create a painting of this scale. Not only did it provide me with the necessary tools, but this grant gave me motivation to create. This motivation fueled me to go on and paint two more smaller pieces as well. I am grateful for this opportunity and proud to present my results. I have attached the preliminary step and the final painting below:

1. Preliminary Indian Yellow and Purple under-layer:



2. Final Painting: 30x30 oil

