

My work centers on issues that are most relevant to people my age. Topics such as identity, LGBT issues, and nostalgia permeate my work. These subjects are things that adults experience as well, but they have a different impact on teens who are still discovering their identities. My exploration of these topics began with my own experiences and the experiences of my peers. When I began IB Art, I was convinced I was going to be a painter. Over the course of the program, however, I found I had a fondness for printmaking. Printmaking is a favorite of mine because no matter how many times you make the same print, it'll always be unique from the last one. As such, the majority of my works are two-dimensional with 4 of them being prints.

My body of works is split into two phases, organized in an emotional progression from dark to light. The first phase has the visually darker pieces. It starts off with small, detailed prints that draw the viewer closer. The largest piece of this section and of the whole exhibition is *Skeletons in the Closet*, which stretches approximately 0.5 meters by 2 meters with a heavily repeated print of a woman screaming, "Oh, the horror!" I've placed on its own wall so it can be viewed with the whole exhibition or individually. The woman is depicted in the comic-style of Lichtenstein, while the repetition was inspired by Warhol, both as ways to represent how LGBT teen suicide is mass produced. The viewer intentionally represents how our society sees tragedy as all the same. I've even had viewers laugh, which is a testament to how desensitized our culture is. This entire first section is meant to be bold and overwhelming with solid sections of stark black and white value, sometimes accented with red.

The second phase is a shift in both subject and hue. The first section still represents hardships that teenagers endure, such as homophobia and constant surveillance. These pieces, *Chrysalis, Or Forever Hold Your Peace*, and *Surveillance* are less overwhelming. They have a variety of softer, more complementary colors as opposed to flat black and white with a singular accent. The last section of this phase consists of two digital pieces: a painting and a collage. Both have a central focus on memory and nostalgia. Both pieces have a bright blue and pink color scheme that contributes to their playful atmosphere. *Hard Times*, my digital painting, is a self portrait of myself inspired by David Hockney's *Sunbather*. The falling locks of hair in the shadow are a reference to the metaphorical meaning of cutting off the past and looking forward to the future.

*Reminiscence* was my first piece of the entire course, and closes the exhibition on a positive note. At the time it had a message on how I'd already grown from freshman year to junior year, but now it holds that meaning tenfold, as I've changed even more since junior year. The hand rising out of the lake represents how it's always possible to overcome obstacles, and the dreamlike quality of the ship-sized bubbles floating through the air adds to its whimsical nature. At this point, the viewer should feel relieved, as if they can breathe now. As the final piece exhibited, it bookends the exhibition as a progression from past to present.

The themes of these pieces progress in a similar way to how I've progressed through the program. As many of these are based off of personal experience, organizing them into a definitive exhibition showcases that progression thematically. The sometimes heavy subject matters are a necessary part of viewing my work. Without the darker first phase, the lighter second phase doesn't have as much impact.