

Artist Statement

Ideas and thoughts often change in the process of creating a work of art. An artist can start with one concept or idea and at the end they can end up with a completely different work of art. When I first started this project I originally just wanted to focus on art. I wanted to create a project synthesizing African art and Latin American street art. I was going to use synthesis in art by combining a painting and a sculpture together. However, upon meeting with the teachers my project did a complete 180. I was instead challenged to change my project all together and to pick a specific idea or topic to use art in. I decided to pick poverty because it seemed like a problem that has been going on no matter what time in history. I really wanted to create a piece that could provide some aid and to find a way to help some people find a way out of poverty. So, I did some research and I found that art, especially in Africa, is being used as a tool to help lift people out of poverty. There are groups and organizations that are teaching people and giving them the opportunity to sell their pieces of work.

I found a bunch of different organizations (with the help of Mr.Wimmer). There are tons of people all over the world that are working to leave a positive impact on the people that are struggling. However, one common theme was that these organizations only focused on one part of the problem. Two of the biggest causes of increased poverty rates are a lack of education and government corruption. I wanted to create a solution that combined the best of these groups together to synthesize a solution that will tackle all of the bigger issues while creating generational change.

I ended up with the idea to create an organization called Project: Esperanza. I chose to name it Project: Esperanza, because esperanza means hope in Spanish. The whole goal of the project is to give these women and their children hope. To help them break the cycles of poverty and to help them escape the daily struggles that they have to endure.

The painting that I created ties into my Social Studies project but mostly is meant to be a visual representation of how education and financial freedom can help break women out of poverty. Women also can help pull entire countries out of poverty, helping to stop the generational trends of poverty. I started painting the background first which was a challenge. Mr.Grandi challenged me to have a more free process of painting for this project, so I didn't map anything out first- I just painted.

I genuinely loved painting the background. Being able to blend the colors and to create the foundation for the entire painting was one of the most relaxing steps of this process. The three colors in the background were actually chosen purposefully. Light blue represents peacefulness, while dark blue represents power and depth. I thought that it was a poetic and true representation of women all over the world. There can be peace and power together to create change. The yellow represents happiness or brightness. I wanted this to be the background for my tree (more about the tree later) because education can open up a lot of opportunities.

After the background, came the flag. The purple in the flag represents independence, but for my project more specifically it represents women's independence. The colors and shapes around it were to tie in some elements of Latin American street art. Latin American street art is mostly used to share important information or ideas. For this reason it is different from many of the other forms of street art around the world. It often touches on governmental, political, social, historical, and sometimes even economic challenges, struggles, or overall views that the people have. I thought it would be fitting to add this element around the flag for women's independence.

Also on the left side of the piece there are more of the shapes and colors to tie in the Latin American street art influence, but also there are two hands intertwined. One of the parts of my project was to create a space where the women from the countries that my plan focused on, could reach out to one another. I think that their power in numbers and to have women from two completely different countries- Venezuela and Nigeria- supporting each other would be a beautiful thing.

The main reason why women's independence in every way is important to reduce poverty is because one of the main causes of poverty in South America and Africa is government corruption. While we cannot overthrow governments, we can support women (and women can support themselves and others) so that they don't have to rely on the government for aid, education, healthcare, and more. Also if the women find independence they are more likely to pass it down to their children breaking the cycle of generational poverty. Additionally, if the women are educated they are more likely to educate their children. Which brings us to the far right of the painting, and my next topic.

Education- the second main cause for poverty in South America and Africa. The tree represents what education is. A structure that can branch out into many things. One of the most important things however- jobs. My plan is to have the women learn to work for themselves, but education is still important. After all, they have to know what to do to work for themselves. Overall, education is very important. To know about people, countries, governments, life and more can be a catalysis for many things in these countries. I want to teach the women about art and how to create art, but maybe they have different and better ideas? Better farming practices, ways to reduce waste, better plumbing/ sewer systems. There are so many things that can be fixed but sometimes you just have to give people the resources and the tools to fix those problems. Education is a major tool that can support so many ideas.

The tree and the painting has elements of African art in it as well. I wanted to still incorporate some African aesthetics like balance of symmetry in the piece, complexity of composition in the tree and in the positioning of the elements in the painting, and lastly clarity to detail. Additionally, the roots of the trees are multicolored and intertwined because education can be about any and everything. Also the hands around the trees are meant to be the hands of children. As mentioned before, where the mother goes, often follows the children. If the woman is educated she is more likely to educate her child.

In the very middle of the piece we have the color green. Green represents the mixture of peace, power, happiness, and brightness just behind the dark form in the middle. All the women in the middle have to do to get to the green is to break out of that form a little more. The dark form represents poverty and the women breaking free represents women pushing to break out of the cycle but also all the people in their predicament wanting to be free. To see the green on the other side.

Lastly, the golden triangle. Triangles are the strongest shape in nature. Just like how women are strong and how they can be the ones to break their people out of this cycle. Gold is there to represent worth because oftentimes women are overlooked, but their worth and strength are the very things that can change entire nations.

There wasn't anything that was too frustrating on this piece. I am just really glad that everything came together. The topic overall is a slightly complicated but encouraging topic. The tales of poverty are heart-wrenching, but the fact that there are people who want to - and that are- working halpe the people that are currently in poverty and to help prevent future generations from falling into poverty is beautiful.

I'm honored to do this project and to learn more about the situation that so many people around the world are living in. However, I am very happy to be able to find solutions/ways to help fix this very serious issue. Lastly, I am proud to name this painting Project:Esperanza.