

Last Saturday I attended the C3 Expo at our school which is an anime convention. This is my second year attending the convention and some of the artists that I have met there. While walking through the event I conversed with artists that create with many different disciplines who came there that day to sell their art. My friend Athena had her own table there (I will do a full interview with her later on) but I went to the various tables and rooms to speak with a bunch of artists and ask them little questions about their art while explaining my project and inquiring about their art process. One of the first artists i interviewed had a unique style of using flip note studio (which is a drawing platform on the nintendo DS) their name is Las Frogas who is currently a fine arts BFA major here at Columbia currently working on their thesis project illustrating through their nintendo DS. Which I feel is a perfect fit for my project because FlipNote Studio is an app that was mainly used for drawing when a large percentage of those in my age group were little. So I was marveled that they were still using something to create amazing art to be sold using an app I had long forgotten about. Their thesis is mainly about their time on the internet as a young child and how the culture of the internet shaped them as an artist and how it inspires the art that they make now. They enjoy making art that is silly, fun, and they want others to view their art the same way and they lastly wanted me to add that they love frogs. I selected them to interview first because I was drawn by their completely unique style and I felt like their art would be amazing on my site.

For the second interview I had recorded it was with Morgan (aka Momo Scribbles) who is a Senior at Columbia and the vice president of the Illustration student group here at Columbia. They draw to keep their imagination alive, and they fear losing their imagination as they get older. They were inspired by anime as a kid and wondered when they were going to represent as a black person in animated media so they started their own comic so that they could create the representation that they wanted when they were younger. This speaks to me deeply because when I was younger I felt the exact same way and when I started to draw or illustrate I naturally created characters like me but I never at the time thought of making projects to fully insert my representation into the world like Morgan is doing. Their goal is to just inspire black people to create and insert their different stories into the media. Which is extremely similar to my purpose regarding this site, wanting to uplift many different artists and showcase their work so that I can inspire many artists of numerous disciplines.

For the 3rd interview was Sleepy fox cosplays, they graduated from Columbia 2 years ago with a degree in fine arts (even though they use illustration more). They get their inspirations from adventure time and anime characters which led to them making

their own characters. After that they evolved into cosplaying their favorite characters at anime conventions and then they realized they could sell their art and cosplay at the same time or at the same event. They have been trying to build up their skills with cosplaying and making their own cosplays as of late. This artist connects to the message of my site and its purpose because they explained how they evolved as an artist and how they built their skills to span across different disciplines which would be a great addition to my site and I personally look up to all the artists that I had interviewed even the ones that I hadn't even mentioned yet but I told all of the artists that I talked to that I would contact them further later if they would like to be contacted further about me. I created a full page to fully display their art and evolution over time.

For my 2nd Research article I wanted to discuss my night at Blackout vol 2. It was an underground Chicago rap music event which was also a birthday event for the person hosting it. My friend Kharri, who is known in the scene for hosting their events known as blackout and they partner with our mutual friend Dalight to both not only make music together but to also plan these events where they can have many different musicians and artists of all disciplines be there to show off their skills and talents. More importantly the events are there to bring people together under a collective so they can not only network with others but to be inspired and realize that also making music and art can be a possibility.

The event was held at the Promotory Point in Hyde Park. I signed up to be a part of the media team where I took several pictures for the artists and I networked with them. Connecting and asking questions with not only the other artists performing but with the media team themselves. Weeks before the event The Blackout team sent Google questionnaires to see if anyone wanted to be a part of the group of people doing media and despite me not having a media page and I just post myself on my page and they knew me that gave me the opportunity to ask the others on the media team questions about their tech how they edit and other questions.

On the media team there were various people with different tech, different skill sets when it came to photography or videography. And they were very open to giving tips on how I could take pictures and networking on future projects. The environment at Blackout vol 2 was absolutely spectacular. Everyone who was there, didn't matter if you were performing or played a role in the event. Everyone was super sweet including the vendors. There were vendors selling sweets, delicious tacos. I honestly forgot the exact names for their brands but as soon as I do I will put them on the site.

If I'm being honest, being there at Blackout and C3 all together made it pretty hard to narrow down who exactly I want to have one on one interviews with to fully. At Blackout there were so many people that rap, sing, and they do so many creative other

things on the side. There was someone on the media team I had already known who does photography, crochet, video editing, illustration and so much more. But to discuss the main part of the event which is my favorite. Was the actual performers.

The performers included Frida Ka\$hflo (she sings and raps. I took so many pictures with her. Her and her friends were so sweet and nice and they loved the pictures I took of them.) Khari (the birthday boy, he raps, does a little bit of singing, and makes a perfect mosh pit whenever he performs). Jaynsanity (one of my favorites. They're so sweet and makes really cool songs. You cannot possibly look away whenever they perform). Hitxion (he's a cool chill rapper who writes really really good lyrics and has really terrific stage presence). Dalightbeam (who i had mentioned earlier who organizes and throws their own events, who sings, raps and puts on a wonderful show every time they come outside). Dai (a wonderful singer and rapper with a super cool style). My absolute favorite Boyneski (she actually goes to Columbia and I met her over a year ago in 2023 in an economics class and she has honestly inspired me to get into this scene and be as creative as I can be. She's an amazing rapper and I love her vision with her projects). Asha Omega (she was an absolute powerhouse when she performed. I took so many pictures of her amazing performance. She sings, and raps a little but it's a perfect combination for the type of music she makes).

There were a few who I missed who definitely raised the roof at the event. But to put it the best way I can. Every single person in the room at Blackout was an absolutely extraordinary individual which is why I love going to these events to meet extraordinary people that are perfect for my project.

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These events I have been to so far have been events where the purpose for them is to gather creatives under one roof to perform, network, and to socialize. For the last social activity I went to to gather research was at a music video. This is the 3rd music video I have done in my lifetime. The other 2 that I have done are with Boyneski for her songs F**k It, and her latest song Pressure that I am on the cover for. This music video was for Enamă, shes a rapper who was also in the Pressure music video with me which is why I asked her if I could join her to be a part of the shooting for her music video on short notice. As soon as I stated that I wanted to be in the music video she sent me a bunch of information stating what was going to be happening during the shoot, the dress codes and other information that I needed to know. We were gonna be given food and there was a short span of time that we would have the space to record the video.

I didn't know what I was fully getting myself into but the texts gave me a little amount of information that I needed. The music that the music video was going to be based on was going to be played on repeat for a while throughout the time for us to shoot so that we could be guided by the music while we filmed our different scenes. I was told that the music video would be a recreation of a classic Chicago juke party vibe where it was meant to be colorful, fun vibes, and dancing. Specifically for the shoots or the scenes they were looking for a "Turn up crew" experience for dancing didn't matter to her. She wanted the crew to be a group of people who during the scenes would dance and keep the energy up. The other role they needed were dancers. Any style was welcome but they did preface that in one of the scenes there would be a "whos next" moment where people in a crowd would one at a time jump in for their own moment to dance in the video.

The next role which I did was the "fresh ass fits". They wanted people who would also dress really well and really cool to turn up to the shoot and whether they were dancing a lot or just being really cool and chill their vibes was very welcomed in the music video. The last role to be included for the video was the "body confidence" role. To better explain it, that role was for anyone who wanted to not only show off their skin in a cool outfit but to make some cool moves. For example they wanted people in that role to twerk for the video, to juke, it didn't matter what their body type was or how they would look if they wanted to just be confident and go crazy for the camera they were very welcomed to do so. But it was prefaced from the beginning that everyone was welcomed and could bring their own authentic style and dance to the music video shoot.

The day of, the whole team met up at the place early to shoot the music video. Once we got inside and headed into the room we would shoot in, we were told the rules where to change, details about the food and lastly what scenes would go first and the order they would go in. The first scene was like a remake of a high school yearbook photo where each of us would have a little screen time in front of the camera. Of course since I stood out the most dressed up as strawberry shortcake they called me first to do my own shoot despite me being the shyest person there. After everyone had finished their mini shoot we did a few dance shoots, for like a few minutes we did the "whos next" portion where everyone had to dance (I managed to be skipped for that shoot) but we ended the last shoots just doing focused shots on the skating girls (a group of girls came for the shoots where they did choreography on skates) we did a myriad of shots making what everyone thought was a really well made music video. But very importantly I was able to connect with many different artist and people of different skills sets who would be perfect for my site.