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Final Project

Dysfunctional Penguin



This piece is titled “Dysfunctional Penguin” to reflect the identity that disabled people have that is often ignored. Typically, disabled people are being discriminated in social and cultural settings because they are different from a normal person. This is also reflected in the education system where children with special needs are often overlooked by the teacher, and are set up to fail in the current education system. However, art and education has helped in bridging this divide in current society.

Uncaring Kermit



This is piece is called “Uncaring Kermit” to show the steps that society has taken to deal with mental or physical disabilities. People with physical disabilities are limited by their environment, and people with mental disabilities are limited in how they are taught to express their thoughts and feelings. Society has moved forward in helping to eliminate these factors in the last several decades by humanizing disability through are and education.

Art Teacher Boromir



This piece is called “Art Teacher Boromir” to reflect the lack of art in education systems. With current society built on centuries of knowledge and technology, the topic of art and music is being left out of school curriculums to make room and time for more academic topics. Critics argue that art and music allow children to develop creativity and boost learning by creating new neuron pathways in the brain. More importantly, art can distinguish society from the rest of history by representing its current cultural and societal ideas.

Fry’s Discrimination



This piece is called “Fry’s Discrimination” to highlight the unrealistic beauty standards set by the media that effects both normal and disabled people. People with physical disabilities or birthmarks are often discriminated and are outcasts because they do not look normal. This holds true for trans people as well. Many trans people use make up to look more biologically close to the gender that they relate to for others to discriminate them less. However, normal people are also affected by these standards. Women often has a lower position than a men’s position, and relationships are often built on this conservative idea.

Create Responsibly



This piece is called “Create Responsibly” to reflect the importance of disabled art in helping give disabled people an identity. Disabled art is a polarizing subject that some argue can influence the audience by artificially invoking an experience. However, art has been a way in recent years for disabled people to express their ideas and feelings. By sharing these feelings and experiences, disabled people have humanized disabilities, creating change in how society view disabilities.

Going into this, I did not know what to expect to learn from what I thought were wide-ranging topics of art, disability, and education. Reading different articles and watching different documentaries has made me reflect on those topics on art, disability, and education in a deeper level than before. While I do know some people with autism, the real-life accounts of people with more disabling illnesses has made me think what it means to be disabled on a social level and how that affects their identity.

Of the three topics covered in this course, I believe my understanding of disability and its effects has reached a deeper level than the topics on education and art. Previously I had believed that disabled people has enough support from government policies and social support to deal with their disabilities. While this perception may be true right now, it certainly was not in this case the last several decades ago. I had learned how discriminatory society is towards people with disabilities because disabled people are different even if some of them are fully function people. This discrimination seems to be fueled by the beauty standards set by the media to promote beauty products for normal people. As such, disabled people are often social outcasts, and her self-aware of their physical appearances. I had previously never thought that much of the stigmatism of disability came for us, the normal people. The cultural and physical environment today has limited the disabled people from fully integrating into society as a normal person because much of society is built and ran by normal people.

Art is a topic that I felt was an interesting topic to touch upon. Growing up, I have always been surrounded by music. Therefore, I picked up many of the topics and ideas throughout the years I was studying music that the course talked about. However, I grew more empathetic towards physical paintings as the course was on the topic of identity and expression. Looking at disabled art of paintings and sculptures made me understand the idea of an experience, which made me realize why disabled art is polarizing. I still do not appreciate many of the forms of art though, but my empathy for the arts has increased.

Education was the topic I felt I learned the least. I had the fortunate opportunity to go to a school district that valued the arts at the lower grades. I had classes in music and art every week on top of academic topics. However, I did notice as I got older that music and art got less attention as more emphasis was placed more on advanced academic topics to set up the students for success later in life. I understand why the school district has a shift in attitude in arts for the older students, but I appreciate the district on introducing arts when we were younger to promote creativity and learning.

I do not feel that my understanding of arts and education has changed much since these two topics are also the ones that I learned the least. Arts has always been a part of my education until I got older and began focusing on academics instead. There were music and painting classes when I was younger that I was in that helped me shape the way I view my environment around me and help me develop creativity. As such, my understanding of arts and education did not change much as I was taking this course.

Reflecting on this course and the topics that it covered did not help me too much in discovering my identity. It might be because that I am normal person, and do not have experience facing some of these hardships that disabled people face. However, I do feel empathetic. There was a time several years ago when I felt smaller and insecure than I am now. I got through my troubled time eventually after I developed a different mental attitude, and started letting things go. I think this realization and shift in mentality made me who I am now, and can relate and understand some of these social prejudices that disabled people experience daily.