

JARED KONOPITSKI

This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things

Spray paint and acrylic, 4' x 6'

2021

THEME

I have chosen Environmental Issues as the theme. It saddens me that we still abuse the largest eco system on earth, our ocean. The ocean has always been a sacred place to me, and it blows my mind that it is violated on a daily basis. From oil spills, illegal fishing, to trash dumping, it saddens my heart. Although it is the greatest mass of water, it seems to be on fire. Let's work together to put the fire out before the tide goes out for good. And I hope one day we can learn to have nice things and treat these eco systems with the respect they deserve. Ultimately, we will benefit more in the long run.

PROCESS

I approach murals with the same process I approach my paintings. However, I must be cautious of the space versus time aspect when considering my design. For large murals/paintings, I like to keep it fairly simple but very bold and striking. I want it to grab the viewer by the retinas from across the room. I consider this in my original sketch and think about how this will translate on a large scale. I then spray paint my surface with bright colors, preferably neon. Then I pencil my image on top. From there I add details with acrylic or house paint and add composition decisions along the way to make sure it is balanced. I love painting big!

ELYSE DOYLE-MARTINEZ

Give Us a Chance to Grow in the City of Trees

Acrylic paint on wood panel, 4' x 6'

2021

THEME

We have lost too many young people. The violence that has devastated our community over the past year and a half has been addressed over and over by City and County officials who focus a majority of their attention on reacting and suppressing the violence, rather than investing and preventing it from happening in the future. This isn't the first generation of youth to be involved in such violence, and it won't be the last if we choose to continue overlooking the underlying issues in our community.

Our young people deserve a chance to grow and thrive in their hometown. It takes a village to raise a child, and for over a year now, a team of youth advocates and community members have been relentlessly asking, alongside our students and alumni, for the City and County to step up funding for youth programs. For healing, mentorship, college readiness, career development and housing - especially for our most underserved youth. No such funding has been allocated. We'll keep pushing, but for now, WE GOT US.

PROCESS

Once I decided on the theme for my mural, I found two photos of former students of mine to be the main subjects. I treated it as if I were creating a silkscreen print, and used *Procreate for iPad* to start drawing, breaking up the colors on each face to enhance the contrast and give them more dramatic shadows and highlights. Once I felt good about the drawing, I transferred the outline onto the wood panel with a projector. Once I had my outline, I was able to fill in the details by eye. I was going back and forth with the idea of wheat-pasting images in the background, but I didn't want to 'busy' the image or take away from the young people who were the focal point. I decided instead to add the words "invest in youth" in calligraphy to parts of the background painted subtly in white that almost blends in.

CHRIS HERMAN

Untitled Dystopia

Acrylic on wood panel, 4' x 6'

2021

THEME

I chose to pursue a traditional mural concept with a political, social injustice theme. The overall message is a personal criticism of the state of the nation motivated by the preceding issues of the 2016 election - immigration, building a wall, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

PROCESS

I started with a few key images – a ghost, a face, and the people fleeing. The challenge was to incorporate these images into the theme. The mouth of the ghost was fashioned with the silhouette of the United States. It hovers over children playing while assault weapons are casually placed close by. Three dimensional, geometrical cubes were used to give the painting depth and direction.

I used a scaled (8.5 x11) preliminary rendering in Adobe Illustrator, as a guide. The entire piece was rendered using hand-cut stencils, from 100# cover stock. The images were composed of 11x17 photocopies pieced together with tape and glue stick.

EMMA MONTALBANO

“Reusable”

Mixed media on wood panel, 4' x 6'
2021

THEME

“Reusable” connects to the environmental issues that surround the world we live in today. Single-use items, specifically plastic, have been on the rise for most of my life. As the use of these convenience items rises, we continue to fill our natural resources with trash. In our society, we are encouraged to reduce, reuse, and recycle. In many ways, this is insignificant to the impact we are making on our planet. The bags pictured were collected in just this way, which I came across as they were on their way to be thrown away just after their very first use. As I explore alternative ways to recycle and comment on the impact we are making on the planet, this piece investigates the irony between something made with “single-use” at the forefront while hiding behind the veil of reusability.

PROCESS

I realized this piece by exemplifying the repeated and multiplying amount of these single-use items in our world via pattern. The plastic bag forms incorporate a printed aspect to the piece. I then adhered the images to the board with wheat-paste, a technique that brings authenticity to the composition by representing the plastic texture they are inspired by. The faces on the bags represent the irony I am exploring regarding the bags' reusable qualities, as the yellow paint on the symmetrical smiley faces exaggerates that comparison.

GLADYS PADILLA

From My Ancestors' Memories

Acrylic paint on wood panel, 4' x 6'

2021

THEME

I included elements that showcase my own culture. It is important to keep these present with younger generations. The hand holds a **Volteotl** (Nahua for Sacred Heart) which reminds us to lead with love and intention. Yolteotl is an outward form of enlightenment geared towards creation. There is a violet rose blooming from the concrete. One side of the wall has cracks and the other side is filled with gold. My piece also features **Quetzalcoatl**, the 'feathered serpent', a main Aztec deity considered to be the god of wind and wisdom or learning. A quetzal bird ascends from Quetzalcoatl which shows the Aztec strength and spirit in all of us. Its green tail feathers, symbols for spring plant growth. Lastly, I included a rainbow tucked between clouds in solidarity of my LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters. It is a pride that should be shared and supported more openly in Mexican culture.

PROCESS

I was more than eager to be a part of the *Larger than Life: Murals in the Making* exhibition, as the year 2020, through mid 2021 was the lowest time for me mentally. This opportunity found its way to me through previous work of mine with YoloArts and TANA. Both are great programs that supported me fully as a beginning muralist/artist. This project really uplifted my spirits as a Chicana artist. It can be easy to slip into a mentality of fear and failure when you don't fit in or feel displaced. For a long time I had an artist block so I let this idea for my mural come to me in my dreams. Yes, when I was asleep! I began with a sketch, refined details and shape, and lastly, I filled in the sketch with color.

The materials used in this piece were solely acrylic paints. All artists were given the basic primary colors red, yellow and blue. At first glance I really thought this project would be time consuming with the mixing. But having prior knowledge of Color Wheel theory I understood my material and I was able to develop my own hues. Every color evokes a strong feeling to me but can be interpreted openly. I wanted to create a clean design that reflected images my younger self needed to see growing up. The journey to completing this project was not simple to say the least. Before I was able to begin my 4x6 panel, I spent a week in a mental hospital for the first time, after struggling with my mental health. But like the spirit of the feathered serpent and the sun I made my return to complete this project

JENN PONCI

Apocalypse Rebirth

Acrylic and spray paint on wood panel, 4' x 6'

2021

THEME

This mural depicts an apocalyptic explosion, representing the global warming issues plaguing the world today. This transitions into using clean transportation, depicted here as an RT train. The end result is new blooming foliage, leaving the viewer with a sense of hope. The message is that we can overcome adversity through conscious choices.

PROCESS

Over two decades ago, my art education began with formal training in traditional mediums and genres. After drawing from observation and painting with oil, watercolors and acrylics, I became immersed in street-art culture. Both play a significant role in the work I create, which is visible from a distance in night or day. However, with ten years learning and working in the tattoo industry, my eye zooms in to the finest needle-sized details. Because of these vastly different specialties, I serve people from all different backgrounds, particularly at momentous times in their lives. These experiences show me what people gravitate to, so I can focus on what really matters to those who will view it.

Inspired by the highs and lows of the human experience, and the universal lessons in our natural world, large aerosol and mixed media murals are designed. Paintings on canvas, wood panels, and found objects come to life like a traditional tattoo. Solid outlines define edges, while negative space allows the piece to breathe. Realistic animals, flowers, and landscapes in bright color palates then flux into splashes and bursts of paint, inspired by the chaos and destruction in life and graffiti.

MELISSA UROFF

Mother No. 2

Acrylic paint, charcoal, wheat paste, paper, ink, spray paint, gold leaf; 4' x 6'; 2021

THEME

The 'Mother' series features women who have stayed true to their calling, while juggling parenthood. Working as a full-time creative person is a challenge, throw a child (or two or three) into the mix and it really takes things to the next level. The sacrifice of self that comes with parenting alongside the 'selfishness' of being an artist is not an easy task to juggle.

For years men have flourished in creative fields whether they have children or not. While men are praised for doing simple tasks with their children, women are torn to pieces. Mothers are in constant judgment, surprisingly even from other women. I have been ridiculed for working (as an artist), however, my husband works 12-14 hour shifts, 5 days/ week, and it is never mentioned to him.

Nearly 3 million women have left the workforce due to the pandemic and childcare. The truth is it doesn't matter how progressive your relationship is, the majority of the responsibility of raising a child falls upon the woman. And when this is paired with a job, such as being an artist, it makes it extremely hard to not give up.

This is why I create portraits of creative women. Women that didn't give up on their dreams and creativity, women that stay up until 3am to paint and still get up at 7am to make their kid breakfast. The tired, driven, wonderful women that are raising children in creative, loving homes. The women who strap a kid to their chest and paint a mural or bring them to the studio with to create alongside them. Let's celebrate the women who are breaking boundaries, being true to the driving force inside them, and taking space in a place that is a thousand times easier for men.

PROCESS

My process is a doozy. It all starts with a concept. The 'Mother' series is a play off of Mother Nature. I have been creating headpieces and in this particular piece we used flowers. Next, we have a photo shoot. Then photos are developed and printed in black and white, they are then collaged together in layers and each layer is painted, drawn on, gold leafed, spray painted, etc. There are lots of layers, lots of medias, and lots of hours that go into each piece.

Mother No. 2, is of Aliyah Sidqe, she is a Sacramento artist, muralist, and activist. Find her on Instagram at @artbyaliyah

ART 171: MEXICAN & CHICANX MURAL WORKSHOP AT UC DAVIS

Acrylic paint on wood panels, 18" x 18" each | 6' x 12' total
2021

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 2021 UC Davis Mexican and Chicano Mural Workshop collaboratively produced this mural-maquette based on the themes of decolonization and indigenous healing. The Mural Workshop is an interactive social justice arts course taught in the Chicana/o Studies department at UC Davis, founded by Malaquias Montoya, Professor Emeritus and co-founder of Taller Arte del Nuevo Amanecer (TANA), and taught by Jose Arenas, the Executive Director of TANA.

PARTICIPANTS

Nadia Barboza

Maira Cisneros

Michaelangelo Colmenero

Natalie Delgado

Amy Flores

Abigail Goeser

Ramon Guardado

Evelyn Juarez

Teresa Leon Ibanez

Nathalie Martinez

Destiny Padilla

Nadia Richardson

Sol Rivas

Keyshawn Scott

Julissa Viveros

Daisy Zacarias

Facilitated by Professor Jose Arenas

THEME

This year's mural workshop collaboration focused on the themes of decolonization and Indigenous forms of healing. Students in the class integrated key symbols like sage and natural herbs that center the work of *curanderas*, or indigenous healers. At the center of the mural is a single *curandera*. Her backdrop is a table of natural medicines, set at nighttime on a full moon in keeping with rituals of traditional indigenous *curanderas*. An essential part of a moon ritual is the altar which represents the sacred space of healing. The altar contains candles, incense, and sage, common objects in Indigenous rituals and ceremonies. The aloe vera is important in the culture of Latinx people, as it is used for its curative properties and can help soothe burns and improve the digestive system.

The mural also includes motifs that reflect the four elements - earth, fire, water, and air. These elements are further represented by *magueys* and *nopales*, burning fire of the candles, the stream of water, and the smoke of the incense. By representing forms of decolonized health care, we show how western medicine is not the only way to heal ourselves. Moreover, the approach of Western medicine can sometimes strip our humanity away. So, through this mural, we honor and acknowledge the power and magic of indigenous forms of healing that attend to our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual illnesses in a holistic and loving manner. - *CHI 171 Students*

PROCESS

This student-led mural maquette is composed of 18 painted panels that were completed individually by students at home. While the pandemic prevented students from working together in person throughout the quarter, they did engage in real time instruction and demonstrations in mural design and acrylic painting techniques with professor, Jose Arenas.

The mural theme was generated by students through student led group discussion and dialogue. The students collectively identified issues of concern in their own lives and in their communities and then sorted and organized these issues into overarching collective themes. Students then co-designed the imagery that would illustrate the mural. Once designed, students were sent art making materials in the mail, or if local, came to pick them up to produce their own squares at home. Once completed the squares were returned to Jose to assemble and install into a cohesive mural.

TANA TEAM MEMBERS

Directed by Jose Arenas, this recreated, final version of the student mural was painted in-person by TANA team members, including TANA staff and interns. The purpose of this in-person representation was to emulate the traditional collaborative process, techniques and feel of Mexican mural making.

In non-pandemic times the students in the UC Davis Mural Workshop would have had the profound experience of working together in the community to make their collective ideas and visions come to life, one brushstroke at a time.

CONTRIBUTORS

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