

Hanna Corneliussen: So we'll get started um i'll start with number one here on the list so first off, can you tell us a little bit about your your piece, like the main themes and how they developed.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah um so I kind of I created this like piece in a time when I was kind of reflecting on like my mental and emotional state of mind.

Burke Edwin Smithers: And it's kind of just like a reflection on like mental health struggle and just the intense energy that it takes to.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Like confront your own emotions like during a time like this, and I was kind of i'm probably speaking for thousands, if not millions of people, when I say that, like, I was in.

Burke Edwin Smithers: kind of a dark place at the beginning of the pandemic um and it was just.

Burke Edwin Smithers: I did you know you don't really know who to look to for like the right answers, because there are so many conflicting new sources in just you know everyone is saying something different, and I think that's kind of how.

Burke Edwin Smithers: This piece evolved because it's just from a place of uncertainty and the inability to decipher like the just the boatload of information that kind of came out at the beginning of the pandemic um.

Burke Edwin Smithers: And that's kind of like where like the spotlights came in, like in the piece like how there's like the little circles.

Burke Edwin Smithers: it's like little it's almost like little.

Burke Edwin Smithers: My way of representing like just these you know blasts of information coming at you.

Burke Edwin Smithers: In different.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Just like across the world, you know you're just you're just getting this information and it's just it's really just so much to process, and I think that i'm also.

Burke Edwin Smithers: The whole idea.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Of like the fact that this information builds up inside you and it sort of you know fractures you from the inside, when you're not realizing it because it's just so intense that you know eventually just takes a really big emotional toll.

Burke Edwin Smithers: So I think that's.

Burke Edwin Smithers: kind of where the themes came from yeah.

Hanna Corneliussen: that's so wonderful I like have to go back and look at your piece and look at the spotlights and everything that is to.

Hanna Corneliussen: pick it all out but yeah.

Hanna Corneliussen: that's wonderful so this exhibit has a dual theme one of standing still in one of a feeling frozen in time and the second of resiliency and emerging from struggle like still standing So what are your reflections on this theme, as it relates to your work.

Burke Edwin Smithers: um yeah I think that well like I said, there was like formed in a time kind of where I felt like I was standing still in the world like I just kind of felt stuck.

Burke Edwin Smithers: And I have like little to no inspiration like to create art, even though I was creating things it just felt in genuine.

Burke Edwin Smithers: And like there wasn't really like a source for creating it, so I kind of just realized that hey like, why did, why do I not create art about what i'm feeling right now, instead of.

Burke Edwin Smithers: You know, drawing inspiration from like the world around me because I was just stuck at home, for you know everyone was stuck at home for several months, and so I think that it's also.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Like reflecting on the theme it's kind of standing still can also be like a bad thing for you, because you're kind of holding on to who you used to be and not really you know, taking in.

Burke Edwin Smithers: The world around you and trying to use that to change yourself for the better, so I think that's sort of how am I work ties into the theme.

Hanna Corneliussen: yeah and it was like a forced standstill to.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Right yeah exactly yeah so that's kind of like, why not, you know use that to you know further yourself and further your own abilities yeah.

Hanna Corneliussen: wow that is such a mature and advanced way of looking at that I would not have been able to.

Hanna Corneliussen: figure it.

Hanna Corneliussen: yeah so um, how do you hope that your art will impact the viewers now you're saying this like what ideas emotions and conversations, do you hope viewers will have.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Yes, was when I was creating the piece I kind of you know, like, I was just kind of in my own head and not really thinking about oh How are people going to um.

Burke Edwin Smithers: You know, look at this piece, and how are they going to capture this own meaning but, honestly I kind of created the piece as a sort of like self portrait um and I think that the kind of gender neutrality of it.

Burke Edwin Smithers: It makes it able for the audience to like project themselves into the piece almost because it's like you know, by looking at the peace it's almost like they're the person looking in the mirror and looking at the truth, you know that they haven't really confronted yet.

Burke Edwin Smithers: So I think that I really hope that, by looking at the peace, people will kind of find like a bit of themselves in the peace and also um maybe even realize like you know some emotions that they didn't realize that they had or just you know lead them to confronting those complex feelings.

Hanna Corneliussen: that's so wonderful yeah that was definitely one of the first takeaways that Danny and I had I think when we saw it was we both really resonated with it, we could we just kind of knew where you were coming from with it and.

Hanna Corneliussen: yeah really yeah.

Burke Edwin Smithers: I think that's like a great well, not a great part of the pandemic, but like it's that's a part of like a natural part of the pandemic because we're all in it together.

Burke Edwin Smithers: So it's almost like when I was creating this our I didn't really realize that you know it would be very like almost accessible like instead of like you know this whole metaphorical thing it's more like concrete in a way.

Hanna Corneliussen: yeah building connection.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah exactly yeah.

Danielle New: yeah I just want to throw in that I.

Danielle New: I really felt like the stress of the piece when I looked at it like with the spotlights and the how it goes into like a molecular level, you know what i'm talking about those like little they kind of like blood cells or something that you drew.

Danielle New: At one point, and I was like oh my gosh like this just it totally made sense, with the theme of the show and, like the just capturing the pandemic feelings and the introspection and just yeah the anxiety of it all and that's how I felt about it, I know yeah I just want to say that.

Burke Edwin Smithers: No yeah that's definitely kind of what I was going for I think in the in the like how it gets um it's kind of like projecting almost like and also zooming in to the smallest i'm like bits and pieces yeah.

Hanna Corneliussen: So cool um so kind of leading into our next question um do you mind telling us a little bit about your past year, like what have you been up to how have these 12 last 12 months impacted you as a student as an artist and an individual level.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah um.

Burke Edwin Smithers: I kind of I really just like threw myself into art and illustration, this year, because it was like.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah it was kind of a huge part of my life before the pandemic, but I think it'd be kind of became like even more of a like serious pathway for me over the course of just being inside and you know, focusing on you know what can I.

Burke Edwin Smithers: What can I improve on like in my situation, so I think that, even if it was like in genuine or like forced I kind of learned that like.

Burke Edwin Smithers: i'm even just creating art, even if it does, feel that way it's so important to like expressing.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yourself and your emotions.

Burke Edwin Smithers: And I also kind of realized that I, as an artist, I even when I don't realize it I am like projecting my own mood into the pieces, because a lot of my pieces last year were like really Moody.

Burke Edwin Smithers: And like black and white, with like you know some red in there and it was it was kind of interesting now that i'm looking back on it to see that I didn't even realize it at the time, but I was using art as like a coping mechanism.

Burke Edwin Smithers: In a way, and also just as like a person.

Burke Edwin Smithers: I kind of like realize that.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Like meditation really helps and it kind of that all that also for some reason just really.

Burke Edwin Smithers: gave me a lot of inspiration for pieces and also just a way to like further reflect on everything going on yeah.

Hanna Corneliussen: that's wonderful I love, how you bring up a coping mechanism, because I feel like looking at art and being able to connect with somebody else's emotions and that validating your own is also a coping mechanism, especially through this you know.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah yeah definitely.

Hanna Corneliussen: awesome um So is there anything that you wish people knew about like first year freshman.

Hanna Corneliussen: going through art school and during a pandemic.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah like um.

Burke Edwin Smithers: I think.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Like you know everyone during this pandemic has been saying, like you know it's okay.

Burke Edwin Smithers: You know we're going to get through this and, like you know you're okay and you're doing okay um but, honestly, I think that, like I wish people would understand that it's okay like to not be okay, sometimes and yeah because I think that.

Burke Edwin Smithers: You know there's a lot of reassurance, which is good and it's helpful, but at the same time it's important to like for people to understand that it's Okay, for you know to be in a dark place and that there are things you can do to get out of that, but it only takes time and healing.

Burke Edwin Smithers: And I think that's something that I really hope people like will you know um some people will.

Burke Edwin Smithers: You know, take away from from this yeah.

Hanna Corneliussen: Wonderful um is there anything that you would like to to add or Danny would like to add, before we wrap up here.

Burke Edwin Smithers: um I think.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Sorry i'm just I was going to find out.

Burke Edwin Smithers: um.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah I think.

Burke Edwin Smithers: That.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah just like one of the another idea is like don't just try and distract yourself like don't just surround yourself with a ton of.

Burke Edwin Smithers: You know hobbies and.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Just like you know media like YouTube tick tock all that stuff like don't just like just take time to reflect on your situation, whether it's through meditation or you know just.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Taking a walk or doing something for yourself um it's just good to have that time to just think um and also just to not always be distracting your mind I think yeah.

Hanna Corneliussen: that's so important and it's so hard not to you know with everything that's going on, but I mean it is important to reflect and try to learn from our surroundings too right.

Burke Edwin Smithers: mm hmm exactly yeah.

Danielle New: yeah I think that that's really great advice, especially for younger people who, I think, are maybe a little more prone to try to distract themselves as a coping mechanism, just because of how much we have available to us.

Danielle New: That our parents and our grandparents did not grow up with Ak tick tock like who who else is like going to apply to you know.

Danielle New: he's got other 30 we doing that basically not really not really I know there's older people who are content, but I totally resonate with that with trying to you know sit with yourself, I mean it, this can be a time of like really a lot of self understanding for people, I think.

Danielle New: So I totally understand what what you're saying, and I want to also just jump back to when you were talking about.

Danielle New: it's Okay, not to be okay, I think that that's a really powerful quote there and it kind of reminds me of like.

Danielle New: The phrase, like the first thing that came to my mind was toxic positivity I don't know if you have ever experienced that when people are you know look let's say something bad has happened to you and you've been to somebody about it and they're just like.

Danielle New: Well, at least you're not you didn't like break your leg today or something you know.

Danielle New: And yeah I think that i've i've felt that way, a lot, where you gotta embrace the good and the bad about the situation.

yeah.

Hanna Corneliussen: Feelings are valid.

Burke Edwin Smithers: mm hmm so true yeah yeah.

Hanna Corneliussen: Well, thank you so much for talking with us today, and being our first one, we really appreciate it.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah yeah Thank you so much you guys, I really I was really excited when I got the email.

Hanna Corneliussen: Oh.

Hanna Corneliussen: yeah well you're.

Hanna Corneliussen: talented we're so stoked to be able to feature your work it's it's really, really great.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Thank you, oh yeah.

Danielle New: I know yeah we're so excited.

Danielle New: And I guess like if you have any just for whoever might be listening to this podcast if you'd have any plugs to talk about like where your llc or art can be accessed or how people can support you.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah um I have.

Burke Edwin Smithers: I can think of what I should employ um well my art instagram instagram is i'm at berk inks so just my first name and then inks um.

Burke Edwin Smithers: And then my I have a portfolio website that's also it's be smothers 513 dot my portfolio.com so yeah yeah Those are the two oh and then also don't worry, I have a red bubble account where I sell some of my art.

Burke Edwin Smithers: And if you just search my name on the platform it'll come up yeah.

Danielle New: Nice Thank you how like is this one of the first exhibit that you participated in just curious about your past experiences.

Burke Edwin Smithers: um I so two years ago I was in the San Juan island museum of art.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Which is really fun and that same piece of art, that I submitted is on display at the Center for whale research.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Which is pretty exciting it's closed right now so it's not really being seen by anyone um but yeah and then also I was featured in.

Burke Edwin Smithers: The Sam teen arts exhibition, which was really fun yeah.

Danielle New: that's so great that's so awesome i'm glad that you are participating in our show, and I hope you're able to come see it too um.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah.

Danielle New: Over the summer yeah.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah I really hope so, the museum will be open.

Danielle New: it's currently open yeah so you know how things kind of have been closing and opening frequently right, but we hope that it'll probably stay physically fit yeah.

Burke Edwin Smithers: yeah hopefully yeah that would be really nice to go up there yeah yeah.

Burke Edwin Smithers: um do we have anything else that we need to.

Danielle New: Thank so.

Danielle New: Good with our end Thank you so much for being interviewed today and also like your responses were all just really powerful and well well phrase like I don't know how many interviews you've done in the past, but it yeah it's it's really been great.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Oh, thank you, this is honestly like one of my I think it is my first.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Like museum interview ever so it was really exciting yeah yeah.

Hanna Corneliussen: Well, thanks again we hope you have a great spring break and a great weekend.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Thank you.

Burke Edwin Smithers: You guys too yeah.



Burke Edwin Smithers: All right.

Danielle New: All right.

Burke Edwin Smithers: Nice meeting you guys.

Danielle New: Nice meeting you.