



PHOTOS BY CHASE CONGLETON/STILLWATER NEWS PRESS
Christina Elliott is the curator of education at the OSU Museum of Art. She worked with the students and helped them curate the project.

OSU's student-curated art exhibit explores human identity

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Art students at Oklahoma State University curated their own exhibit at the university's Museum of Art.

The exhibit, which is titled "Constructing Identity | Perceiving Humanity," consists of over a dozen of the museum's art pieces.

Professor Karen Greenwalt's class, which consisted of both undergraduate and graduate students, was divided into different teams each with their own skills and objectives for the project.

Macy Jennings is an art history graduate student at OSU who was a part of the class's curatorial team. She said this project gave her an in-depth look at what it's like behind the scenes at a museum.

"We got to actually work with the museum and the facility ... so it was also really interesting to see from start to finish," Jennings said. "This was the first chance I got to really go in ... and see what it takes to get those revisions to get that information and research done."

Students were able to choose between more than 50 artworks from the museum's permanent collection. From there, they were able to come up with the theme and decide which pieces best fit the exhibit.

The collection explores artists' perceptions of identity throughout the ages with some pieces combating negative stereotypes or expressing abstract feelings.

One particular artwork that caught Jennings's attention was Roger Shimomura's "Kansas Samurai." Seeing that Shimomura is a Japanese-American artist, Jennings said his work fits the theme of constructing identity.

"Recently, the body of work that was a part of was the context of people coming and asking him, 'So where are you from?'" Jennings said. "I think that's something that really translates to some important conversations today that have been happening."

Jace Earwood is another art history graduate student at OSU who helped with the publication of the exhibit. Earwood said they were able to learn valuable lessons while pursuing their certificate for museum studies.

"I learned how to take images and have conversations about abstract concepts like patriarchy ... with audiences who might not have been introduced to that concept before," Jace Earwood said. "That was probably the thing I learned most effectively during this exhibition, to have those really big conversations and ... sum it all up on 3 walls."

Christina Elliott, the museum's curator of education, worked extensively with the students in communicating and curating the exhibit. She said that patrons can learn more about how people think about portraiture and identity within art.

"There's so many different ways to pull back with the show," Elliott said. "It is human faces and so there's a lot of things that we can easily relate to, but it does also challenge us to think more critically about the way we look."

The museum premiered the exhibit on April 20 and the exhibit has been free for all patrons since then. The last day to view the exhibit will be July 24.

Starting next week, the museum will launch its next exhibit consisting of works by Doel Reed. That exhibition will be installed until the end of October.



Works such as "Apocalypse 6" by Keith Haring and William S. Burroughs were featured in this exhibit.