Invisible in America

UAA ART491 senior seminar exhibition
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And to John Dede, Director, UAA/APU Books of the Year, for providing the opportunity for students to showcase their work and talent in a meaningful way.
The UAA/APU Books of the Year program is proud to collaborate with Senior Seminar art students on “Invisible in America.” Their work demonstrates the ability of art to portray multiple layers of interpretation, and illustrates how learners can be actively engaged in academic discussion of contemporary social issues through artistic expression.

The books selected by faculty serve as the catalyst for discussion of larger issues of local and international significance.

We hope you enjoy this catalogue of outstanding images, and discuss the underlying messages with you friends.
Amber Webb is an Alaska Native artist from Dillingham, Alaska who has amassed a portfolio heavy in the exploration of the pixilated human form. She draws from her “working poor” childhood in rural Alaska by implementing a conservative and innovative use of materials, which, in the case of these two tapestries, is discarded acrylic yarn.
Defeated
12.5 x 14.5 in.
RECYCLED ACRYLIC YARN

Perpetual Reach
18 x 24 in.
DISCARDED ACRYLIC YARN
College artists work minimum wage jobs just to get through college, only to exit college with immense student loans. Then what? We continue working one, sometimes two jobs that have nothing to do with creating artwork just to get out of debt. What was the point of going to college if we don’t get to do what we enjoy doing, which is creating art? It’s an endless cycle of poor college students getting stuck at the bottom. We are the working poor.
Nude Model No.1
18 X 22 IN.
CHARCOAL

Nude Model No.2
18 X 22 IN.
CHARCOAL
Darla Forman

I wanted to illustrate the idea, often driven by colorful politicians, that people are poor simply because they are lazy. The poor are demonized, called names, dehumanized and accused of ruining the country. This idea is perpetuated by extremely rich entitled people who have never even come close to poverty. I chose to work with the encaustic medium for this project because I thought it would illustrate the hard circumstances many people struggle against in their fight to overcome poverty.
The Image of the Poor
12.25 x 12.25 in.
INKJET PRINTS ON TRACING PAPER
ENCAUSTIC MEDIUM | APPROPRIATED IMAGES

Colors of the Poor
12.25 x 12.25 in.
INKJET PRINTS ON TRACING PAPER
ENCAUSTIC MEDIUM | APPROPRIATED IMAGES
What begins as vision becomes manipulated into a carnival of temptation, leaving a sense of failing and the dawn of a new synthesis. By creating situations, breaking spectator passivity, finding that movement reveals an inherent awkwardness, a whimsy that echoes our vulnerabilities. Also considering movement as a metaphor for the ever-seeking who experiences a continuous loss. My artworks are inspiration based: visions that reflect a sensation of indisputability, and serene contemplation, combined with subtle details of eccentric, humoristic elements. The drama unfolds while the tension is frozen to become the memory of an event that will never take place.
**My Space**
14 x 22 in.
CHARCOAL ON ILLUSTRATION BOARD

**Sofia’s Inner Light**
15 x 23 in.
CHARCOAL ON PAPER
My influences are first and foremost everything I see, feel and experience. Sometimes my drawings are left in the sketchbook and other times they develop into more in-depth ideas and detailed images. Hopefully my artwork can speak for itself and whatever it says to the viewer is fine. Each person takes something a little different from the same piece of artwork.
Hanging on by a Thread
4 X 4 IN.
AQUATINT ETCHING & THREAD

Borrowed Parts
10.5 X 8 IN.
AQUATINT ETCHING
Jabaree Moss

I have honestly never set out to produce anything that is about one subject or another. Due to this lack of forethought I rarely carry around a sketchbook but, strangely enough, I always seem to have a pen in my pocket. Art, in my opinion, has always been something that is up to only the artist interpretation. I understand that a patron, the individual who commissions the piece, has an opinion that should be observed but I do not believe that the opinion of the masses is that important. I myself just like art for its own sake and that’s all there is to it.
The first image, “Anger” signifies how people will work themselves down to the bone and become so frustrated that they can’t make ends meet.

The second piece, “Denial” signifies the working poor through the model’s minimal clothing and the position of her hands. Her eyes are covered because she doesn’t want to face reality and the fact that she is barely making ends meet.
Anger
20 X 30 IN.
GRAPHITE & CHARCOAL

Denial
23 X 29 IN.
GRAPHITE
My piece, “Like Father, Like Son,” addresses the idea that financial struggle is generational. It is a cycle that perpetuates itself when struggling families lack the capacity to provide equal opportunities for their offspring who then come up short in the workforce as they develop into adulthood, and follow in their parent’s footsteps. My piece, “Unknown,” speaks to the idea that the working poor doesn’t have a face. It can be anyone at any time. The disadvantages of the economy has rattled every class’s financial security, and being blind to the problem neither solves it nor protects you or your family from becoming a part of it.
Like Father, Like Son
9 X 12 IN.
CHARCOAL

Unknown
16 X 21 IN.
GRAPHITE PENCIL
With “Climb” I was hoping to illustrate the viscous nature of human avarice that has scared our society. People ascending one-another toward an unknown goal, always on the backs of others. Some climb simply to escape the weight crushing down above them. “Layers of Confusion” is an attempt to express the way in which insurance companies obscure the true cost of medical services by burying their own expenses under layers of impenetrable paperwork. This allows them to raise the price of their coverage plans. The sick consumer, desperate and perplexed, will accept the said costs and pay an abhorrent price. Due to this falsification, many middle and lower class citizens will avoid preventive help altogether.
Climb
14.7 x 28 IN.
MIXED DIGITAL

Layers of Confusion
14 x 5.4 IN.
MIXED DIGITAL
In my series of drawings I wanted to illustrate the concept of being invisible in America. The method I used to create these pieces was by rewriting that phrase, “Invisible in America”. This demonstrates how a few people can be lost to the system without consequence but if multiplied it becomes an unavoidable epidemic that needs to be addressed. These portraits get lost among the background to signify how easy it is to get lost among the system and the empty promises the United States advertises.
Fading Away Series
8.5 x 11 in.
PAPER & PEN
In my artwork, I’ve tried to capture the true nature of the life experiences of the working poor and the innate helplessness that goes along with that title. The piece entitled The Debt I Drown In deals with the suffocating nature of debt and collections and explores how one deals with these on an emotional level. The piece entitled What I Amount To explores the transient nature of life as a member of the Working Poor and emphasizes the psychological impacts of debt showing how the numbers that rule your purse can ultimately take over your life. These pieces are a visual description of the transient experience, the life of a passer-by, always seeing joy from the outside in, never receiving the fruits of their labors.
The Debt I Drown In
13 X 19 IN.
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

What I Amount To
13 X 19 IN.
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
The two pieces of artwork that I have created for this show are Perils and Pitfalls. These photographs showcase the quicksand that surrounds the multitudes of American communities that live below the poverty line. Through my perception, I hope all who look upon my work will evoke a fountain of wide-ranging emotions and then question their own ideas about what it means to be Invisible in America.
Perils
11 x 14 in.
INKJET PHOTOGRAPH

Pitfalls
13 x 19 in.
INKJET PHOTOGRAPH