

Noteworthy Nature Art Entries

The Earth Is Melting and So Are We

I have noticed that among my peers, social media has a strong influence on our actions and values. Instead of taking pictures to capture a special moment, we take pictures for the aesthetic, to upload to our Instagram or TikTok. When we look at the world through a small screen, there seems to be a disconnect with the real world. We are repetitively told that climate change is an issue, but to many, a picture of the melting polar ice caps is just another photo for more “likes.”

I believe that despite the convenience and accessibility, digital photos have significantly diminished the value of the photographs being taken. It is easy to take, keep, erase, and even restore digital photos. This is why my painting is of a Polaroid, and of Polaroid photos of climate change issues. Each Polaroid in the world is unique, and cannot ever be replicated or restored. Similarly, we need to remember that the Earth is unique, and this is the only Earth that we get. Perhaps Polaroid photos that capture the consequences of climate change—the rapid changes to ecosystems, pollution, the displacement and loss of many species—will encourage people to truly understand what is being taken in the photo, and start appreciating our nature, ecology, and the Earth.

—*Sunwoo Na, grade 10, South Korea.*

Wind and Water

This is a depiction of traditional Korean tiled buildings floating gracefully across the sea. Looking at the charming scene, you're struck by wind blowing over your face, shaking tiles and stirring water for a quiet dance.

In capturing the essence of the Korean landscape and its rich cultural heritage, which is reflected in every aspect of its architecture, the colors in this painting are vivid and alive. There is a stunning visual contrast between the bright, lively house against the calm and serene water that reflects the unchanging nature of our world.

As you explore this work of art, I invite you to contemplate the theme of wind and water. The wind is an inexhaustible source of energy for life, continuously moving and constantly evolving. The water, on the other hand, is an expression of calm and peace, reminding us that in a world where there is always change, we must find equilibrium.

—*Harry (Hyunwoo) Son, 17, grade 11, Seoul, South Korea.*

The Green New Deal

My artwork is inspired by the New Deal that was promoted to re-inflate the sharply fallen economy in the 1930s by President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the U.S.. I believe that the present is an appropriate time to revive the broken Earth ecology due to global warming and climate change. I think there should be more specific regulations to solve the worldwide issues. Although there are already global efforts, such as the 17 SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) of the United Nations, I wanted to focus more on the examples from the past, and how we solved the issues that people experienced during the Great Depression.

—*Joon Seok Lee, grade 9, Connecticut.*

Like The Oceans We Rise

This piece is meant to identify the problem of ocean pollution and present ways to fix it (through innovation, awareness, and building communities). It connects humanity with the ocean. The piece itself is also a call to action on ocean environmental justice as a form of awareness.

—*Serena Lin, age 15, New Jersey.*

Reflection (on back cover)

This is a portrait of an elderly Tibetan woman. I was inspired to create this painting after seeing a reference photo my art teacher showed me. I hope this piece encourages people to ask questions about her story: Where did she grow up? Who is her family? What stories and anecdotes can she share about her experiences living in Tibet? For me, art is more than colors on a canvas. Instead, it is a way of telling stories and shining light on different people and their respective cultures.

As an artist, I've realized that diversity goes hand in hand with creativity in fostering an artistic community. Viewing art, whether it be online or in art museums, has broadened my knowledge of different colors. Although everyone may use the same reference, each person produces a unique creation that demonstrates their style, from the brushstrokes to the use of color. When I view my peers' artwork, I find the individuality in each piece incredible. Although art builds upon certain technical aspects, its diversity is what makes it so remarkable. Diversity carries art forward and encourages people to become artists. My role as an artist, among others, is to maintain this diversity by welcoming new perspectives wherever I go.

—*Desiree Luo, grade 11, California.*



By Serena Lin, age 15, New Jersey.



By Sunwoo Na, grade 10, South Korea.



By Joon Seok Lee, grade 9, Connecticut.



"Wind and Water" by Hyunwoo (Harry) Son, gr. 11, S. Korea.