

## Final Reflection

Judy Tallwing, author of *White Spirit Bears*, changed my thought process when it came to using reclaimed materials to create images of social justice. (News from the visionary!) Tallwing used resin, silver, garnet, sterling, acrylic, copper, and diamonds in her painting of the *White Spirit Bears*. White Spirit bears are actually a species of the American Black Bear that live in British Columbia, Canada; every 9 cubs there is a white “spirit bear” born. (Icon for an Endangered Ecosystem) An oil company wanted to put the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline next to the Great Bear Rainforest. With there only being approximately 400-1000 spirit bears and the oil company’s reputation for oil spills could potentially make these bears extinct. The American Visionary Arts Museum created the Army of Poets campaign to protest the pipeline being installed, thanks to the poem of quotes the pipeline will not be placed in this location.

The first piece I made this week is a crayon sign that says 15 million American children go without necessary school supplies. I am working towards my concentration of elementary education and hope that I can keep this until I have my own classroom so my students and parents can see that they are not alone and that many other families have trouble buying their children the supplies they need for school each year. This is a topic that is over looked by many Americans every year as we send our school supplies to other countries in need but never think about our own neighbors that may not be as well off as us. Almost all public school teachers spend their own money to purchase school supplies for students in their class that can not afford to buy their own materials.

I had gotten the idea for this piece from my sister’s art project where she melted crayons vertically; however this project took a spin on the basic idea of melting crayons. When I made this piece I painted it and melted crayons on the top. This was a harder challenge than I expected as the crayons wanted to fly away so I ended up gluing the crayons to the boarder in order to melt them. When the crayons where staying in place and melting, I realized they were not melting the way I had planned. However, now that I reflect on the project I really like the effect they make melted the way they are. I glued the crayon peeling around the edge so I would not waste the papers and to add a fun boarder. Last I carved the words into the crayons and glued them onto the board. When we commented on each other’s work many people gave me suggestions for how to make the words more visible, I applied water colors and then tried to wipe the excess off to only leave the color in the letters. This did not work as well as I would have hoped and it had left a slight smeared look on some of the crayons.

The second piece I made this week was a birdhouse made from a half gallon milk carton. I plan on putting some bird seed in it when I get home and leaving it in a sturdy tree to hopefully see some birds use it. When I made my bird feeder I painted the milk carton many times to cover the dark letters on the container and cut out the hole for the birds to enter through. I had a hard time finding good natural materials to make the roof out of. Leaves melted when I applied hot glue to them and slipped around when craft glue was applied. I ended up using tree bark for the roof. The tree bark almost gives you an effect like shingles and the carton has a nice natural slope to it so it placed perfectly on top. I took a sturdy branch and cut it down to use as a perch for the birds that are entering and exiting the home. I knew I wanted to create a small wreath over the opening but had trouble finding dry sticks that were flexible enough to make into a circle as it had rained the night before. Someone else had an old broom which I took some pieces from and created my circular wreath from. I then found some small rocks and painted them red,

like berries. I then painted flowers on two of the sides. I applied some gold sparkle to some of my flowers like Tallwing had applied the crushed diamonds to her painting to make it slightly sparkly. (News from the visionary!) On the back of the milk carton I painted a large tree, which was an obstacle for me. I had never been good at drawing trees so I was terrified how a painted one would turn out. I painted the trunk of the tree first and then applied another color of brown to the trunk to give it a more realistic look. I then had to make the leaves but the only green paint I could find was a bright like grass green which I felt would not give a presentable look for leaves. In order to make the green I wanted for the leaves I mixed green, blue, and yellow nail polish and dabbed it on to create a more natural effect for the leaves.

I learned that what I throw away in day to day life can be used to make anything and can be made into a truly beautiful piece of art. Anyone can create art, it's not a highly skilled thing it's something anyone can do with some time and patience. Art is something that can release your childish side and can make you happy when you see your finished project. This class also helped me see how one can express themselves through their artwork to support a cause that is dear to their heart. Before this class I had never thought of art as being open to the viewer's interpretation and always saw it as a very structured "this is what it is" type of thing. Now I can look at anything and see it as whatever I feel fits the piece or items. I also learned about making old books into art in different forms, I got some used books out of the book recycling in the Johnson Center and I cannot wait to try to turn them into a beautiful new master piece. Overall I learned a lot about recycling and reusing items and can not wait to use this new way of thought in everyday life.

#### Work Cited

"Icon for an Endangered Ecosystem." - *National Wildlife Federation*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 Aug. 2013.

"News from the Visionary!" *American Visionary Art Museum*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 Aug. 2013.