

ART IS ART

Makenna Christensen, senior

The beauty behind Art is that it comes in so many forms—it promotes a sense of community for people who are distinctly their own, making uniqueness the commonality. For me, painting acts as a platform to express my ideologies, as well as my own wordless commentary on the society I live in. Artists don't simply create to please aesthetically, but also to challenge the status quo and push the boundaries of what Art can be. In many ways, I consider Art to be a lot like life; it's not just all pretty flowers and landscapes—sometimes it's a struggle, and it's raw and unrefined, which is what makes any form of Art beautiful.

Time and time again, we hear that “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” however I do not find that to be completely true. Just because the notions of ugliness and beauty lie outside of the realm of scientific proof does not justify them to be declared absolutely relative. We qualify these traits; we look at a pile of trash and think “ugly,” then we look at celebrities and think “beauty.” This idea that everything must be qualified closes so many people's minds to Art because they place value on it based on its assumed beauty instead of the message being conveyed. Oftentimes, Art is censored for content, but without explanation, as if somehow a singular person or institution gets to decide what is and is not considered Art. And for an artist, such as myself, it is one of the most gut-wrenching feelings to have to encounter.

Personally, I am blown away by the content that people seem to be so offended by. Contrary to popular belief, the human body—especially the female body—is not sexual, but sexualized. Everyone in the world has a body that they see everyday, it is neither unnatural nor inappropriate. Society today condoning what we

know as “rape culture” does not mean the human body becomes controversial. If our bodies had always been so controversial, we wouldn't have artists such as Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and even Georgia O'Keefe. It is because we live in a society that allows the human body to be deemed inappropriate that teens and even adults have become so close-minded and conservative.

Being a part of a high school that emphasizes its acclaimed International Baccalaureate and Palmetto Center for the Arts programs on the basis that they are open-minded, diverse, and rich in the arts, and juxtaposes that with the censorship of student art is what confuses me and much of the student body the most. As a student in these programs, I am obligated to create cliché-free Art that makes a statement. I chose a passion of mine: body positivity and addressing society's commentary of the female form. Much of my art is centered around the over-sexualization and censorship on a woman's body, which ironically and much to my dismay, is the exact response I was given from the school and district. The very idea that a student's Art can be censored on the premise that the natural body is offensive or obscene only further proves the point I intended to make. So, as I said, Art isn't all pretty flowers and colorful landscapes; it's raw and real, and that makes it beautiful. But in my case, that beauty was stripped away with a single stroke of authority's paintbrush.

To any artist in the future who has their work censored: don't feel upset with yourself as if you did something wrong—trust me you didn't. Be proud, hold your head up high, and don't be afraid to let your voice be heard. And to everyone else: always remember that Art is Art, and don't ever let anyone tell you you're wrong about what's beautiful. ✨



FOCUS



CENSORED

Allison Killinger, senior

