



Turning Their Artwork Into Their Business

I was reading the Baltimore sun newspaper (March 12, 2017) and saw an article that tweaked my interest. The article began on a rather down note because it talks about a youth (Perry Costley) being killed in a drug gone bad. Out of that tragedy, members of the youth's family, discovered while cleaning up his room, a cache of artwork and lyrics of songs never shared with anyone.

His aunt, vowed to do something about what she had found and established BlankCanvas 2Art, which is a nonprofit aimed at helping young people turn their artistic vision into businesses. On March 11, 2017, at McDaniel College in Carroll County, art students pitched art related business ideas, with more than \$25,000 in prize money. It was Perry Costley's cousin who took home \$15,000 for his proposal to create Gender Expressions. This will be a company that would design and manufacture unisex undergarments for the transgender community. Other proposals included: an art therapy café', a salon style tattoo, a restaurant that would serve art opportunities rather than food, and a café' that would be tailored to the LGBT community.

The nonprofit, which is backed by Community Foundation of Carroll County, brought a wide range of professionals to the sessions. Each plan had to address the following criteria; describe the need for the product, present a business model and articulate a vision for marketing and sales. Lastly, offer financial projections as well as milestones over the next ten years.

I thought the article was very thought provoking in the sense that it gave you various points of view as the question; "Is our art equal to the challenges of our times." The article referenced many different approaches to portraying art and the desired effect of some artists. Most serious artist attempt to create based on their perception of honesty, truth, and love. These emotions are the driving forces that helps an artist do what they do. However, external forces such as personal situation and or worldly state of affairs can have an impact on creativity.

The article alluded to the question of the social responsibility of art and the relationship it has with the world. It seems like that is a question yet to be answered with a distinct definition. Some artists believe that it is not their responsibility to do anything unless it is something that they really want to do. Yet, other artists fell as though it is the artists responsibility to mirror social conditions.

I came to the conclusion that art should come from within and reflect your personal viewpoints. That should be the motivating force to make you want to share and not be driven by the outer perimeters of your life. Even though, we are living in troubled times surrounded with despair, economic disparities, issues that separate family, community, and state, it doesn't mean that art should reflect the same state of being. Art can serve as a means to take one to a better place.