

Window to the art world

Teens lean about art, cultures while helping curate exhibit

By Tyler Rowland
Generation Next

The notion that a mirror serves as a window into our soul has been a long-standing concept. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of a mirror is that it has no actual qualities of its own aside from its material form — it is a blank check for the world to write and its audience to cash.

Whether the symbolic purpose of a mirror is to reflect the truth, or just the truths that we can see on the surface, is just one question posed by the art exhibition *The Mirror Effect: Reflections Upon Our Realities*, which opens with a public reception Friday, May 12, at the Ralph T. Coe Foundation for the Arts in Santa Fe.

Eight Santa Fe students have been working with adult advisers since October to curate the show, using 40 works from the Coe Foundation's permanent collection of some 2,000 art pieces. The works range from a pre-Colombian Peruvian pot to a pair of decorated contemporary sneakers by Kiowa artist Teri Greeves.

"This [curatorial] program provides an amazing bridge between students and objects," said Bess Murphy, assistant curator for the foundation. "They get to have direct hands-on experience with indigenous arts from all around the world. ... This is a way for them to experience these other cultures in a direct and immediate way."

The students chose the mirror as a theme because, as curator Gailene Morgan put it, "The show is supposed to be the 'reflections' that everyone sees in the pieces — our perspective on the pieces and what kind of connection we have to certain ones. Also, it's supposed to open the mind of others, for them to see what connections they have with pieces."



From left, Bess Murphy, Coe assistant curator, Dynette Chavez, Elizabeth Lovato, Heaven Talachy, Danielle Cata at the Coe. PHOTOS COURTESY COE FOUNDATION

Shante Toledo, one of the teen curators, chose a number of pieces with historical significance in order to connect the reader to her favorite subject in school: world history. Every piece on display is given a brief, student-written description of its history and where it comes from, which is accompanied by the curator's own reasoning for selecting the piece in the context of the show's theme.

Student curator Oscar Loya said that the group was able to paint an expansive picture of how the average person relates to different pieces of art. One point in particular the eight students said they enjoyed was how, with selections from around the world to choose from, they were introduced to cultures they were not even aware of.

Though the curators may not pursue careers in the field of the arts, taking part in this project opened their eyes to the possibilities that art offers them in their lives. For example, Ashlyn Lovato, a student at Santa Fe Indian School, said that even though she has tentative plans to study pre-med in order to become a sports-medicine physician, the program makes her consider the role of art in her life.

For viewers, the passions expressed throughout the exhibit make it clear just how connected the curators are in trying to reflect on who we are and how we see the world.

Tyler Rowland is a freshman at The University of New Mexico. Contact him at Trowland98@hotmail.com.

Unknown (Ashanti/Akan), Ibex Ring, early 20th century, Ghana. On display at *The Mirror Effect: Reflections Upon Our Realities*.

IF YOU GO

What: *The Mirror Effect: Reflections Upon Our Realities*

When: Opens 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, May 12, and runs through July 7

Where: The Ralph T. Coe Foundation For The Arts, 1590-B Pacheco St.

More information: The exhibition is free and open to the public, but visitors must make an appointment after opening night. Call 505-983-6372.

Ralph T. Coe Foundation for the Arts

Michael Abatemarco | Posted: Friday, May 12, 2017 5:00 am

Ralph T. Coe Foundation for the Arts, 1590-B Pacheco St., 505-983-6372

New and returning students from the Santa Fe Indian School and the Academy of Technology and the Classics come together for a third year as part of the Coe Foundation's Hands-On Student Curatorial Program, which provides them with opportunities to work on professional level exhibits curated from the foundation's collection of more than 2,000 objects of indigenous art. Students learn all aspects of curating and mounting an exhibition and collaborate with Warehouse 21 on limited run, curator-designed T-shirts. Their latest exhibition *The Mirror Effect: Reflections Upon Our Realities*, opens with a 5 p.m. reception on Friday, May 12.



Spiraling

Steve Smith: Spiraling Inward, circa 1990, maple wood and paint

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Oscar Loya, Heaven Talachy, Dynette Chavez, Gailene Morgan, Ashlyn Lovato, Danielle Cata, Elizabeth Lukee, Shante Toledo on field trip to IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Art

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