

The future's so bright

Local youth create mural of their dreams of a world affected by activism

By Dana Sparks

The Register-Guard

Thinking of a world transformed by community, justice and healing, a group of young artists channeled their visions into a mural showing their bright, optimistic future.

The work by the students in Art for Change, a street art and art activism class led by local artist and teacher Frédérique Château, will be on display at Friendly Street Market as part of Visual Arts Week.

The class, held last week, began with brainstorming issues that are on their minds; the list included homelessness, the coronavirus, pollution, racism, deforestation and many others.

“Their awareness of the world is amazing, and at the same time, it’s a lot to carry. Despite that, they have as much as happiness and joy and hope as anyone else,” Château said. “When I began to see what they were putting together, it brought this feeling of hope. They’re going to create their world the way they want to.”

The youth’s vision included unity, acceptance, justice, human rights and healthy people, food and environments. Everyone in the class, even the youngest, contributed to imagining their future, according to Château.

The first day of the class was

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ABOVE: Story Frazier-Maskiell, 12, paints American flags on the flowers of the central figure of the students’ mural. Her use of flowers and the flag symbolize a changing country. [PHOTOS BY DANA SPARKS/THE REGISTER-GUARD]



LEFT: Teacher Frédérique Château provided soft pastel chalks for the students to draw on the sidewalk outside of the Madison Meadow Park. The pastels are still washable, but they blend better than regular sidewalk chalk.

Local artist and teacher Frédérique Château



defining public art and art activism over Zoom video call. The following day was a field trip through the Whiteaker neighborhood murals before ending in front of the federal courthouse to look at the Black Lives Matter mural.

“We spray painted a lot of (the class’s mural), so they learned proper spray painting, making stencils and how you would do it on the street,” Château said.

The group worked on signs and planning what messages they wanted to convey. They also were given the opportunity to work with washable pastels on the sidewalk outside of the Madison Meadow Park.

“I think that America really needs to change and people shouldn’t pretend that it’s all good. So, my flowers are to represent America changing by working together and changing it,” said Story Frazier-Maskiell, 12, while painting flowers made up of the same pattern as the American flag. “Us kids can’t run for president, we can’t be a

great to put out a point, but sometimes it’s depressing. I wanted make a piece of art that is what I want in the future, not what’s going on now, like trash in the ocean.”

Gruener was also in charge of painting the solar system even though she didn’t contribute that to the brainstorm or draft. She couldn’t speak to why it was created, but it did inspire her.

“Change doesn’t have to just be in this world. The energy can go out throughout the universe.”

The finished mural will be displayed on the patio of the Friendly Street Market, 2757 Friendly St., beginning today in conjunction with the Visual Arts Week hosted by the Lane Arts Council.

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politician or anything, so we have to find other ways to change the world.”

Frazier-Maskiell took the class with her two sisters, Pippa, 10, and Lucy, 8.

Lucy painted a pair of turtles in a clean ocean with sea plants and crabs, among other things: “Someone was doing clean water so I wanted to draw some animals: I drew turtles because I like them and they are good sea animals.”

Pippa painted an array of people with different abilities, cultures and races “accepting each other,” spending time in a lush green field with clean, running water. While she wasn’t quite sure what inspired her vision, she knew that this was the change that she wanted for the future.

“We all worked on the stuff, but I originally sketched out the sunset and ocean scene,” said Lucie Gruener, 14. Gruener is Château’s daughter. “What I see in a lot of murals, painting and art in general is very sad, and it’s reality. It’s



Matthias Donner, 17, paints bees by hand around the central figure of the mural. [DANA SPARKS/THE REGISTER-GUARD]

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