Wearable Art for a Purpose

Curating Artivism 2023: Wearable Art for a Purpose exhibition at Teachers College was a creative challenge and a delight. The artists in this show brought forth ideas from many corners of the fashion world, from recycled materials to fair trade to the very idea of what it means to express one’s identity through clothing and accessories.

The highlight of this year’s exhibition is undoubtedly the series of masks created by Adelphi University students in Professor Argie Agelarakis’ Art for Restorative Justice course within the Criminal Justice Program, Sociology Department. I was struck by how each artist dealt with the duality of the mask,–its form and the meaning that it can convey. It felt important to install these masks in such a way that both the inside and outside of each one could be seen clearly. Now they greet passers-by in the Offit Gallery with colorful intensity, each one carrying the maker’s concerns, from spirituality to body image to mental health.

Impactful exhibitions are made when the artist or artists have a story to tell, a story that lives so powerfully within them that it cannot be expressed any other way except in their chosen art form. The artists we featured come from various countries and a variety of artistic backgrounds: ranging from years of experience to first-time exhibitors. While the subject matter and experiences of this group is diverse, Wearable Art for a Purpose is united by the most important factor indeed: all of this wearable art was produced with a very strong purpose.

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