

BEYOND LABELS | MÁS ALLÁ DE LAS ETIQUETAS

Portraits by Virmarie DePoyster

October 28, 2021 - January 29, 2022



Artist Statement: Virmarie DePoyster

"Where are you from?"
"Do you have a green card?"
"Are you a real artist?"

A day in my shoes.

We, as humans, have been making assumptions and prejudging each other as a means to better understand one another since the beginning of time. After being constantly mislabeled as a foreigner because of my accent, and frivolous because of my profession, I began to question how the labels and judgments others place upon us influence our identities.

Over the years I have come to realize that the labels we assign each other have power to either divide or connect us. Recently, I began to wonder about others' experiences with mislabeling, and decided to ask both friends and strangers in my community to consider being interviewed and photographed for a painting. They were each asked to bring an item or embody a persona which illustrated how they see themselves. During these interviews, we explored issues of identity and connection through in-depth conversation about the significant labels that have affected their lives.

These pastel portraits aim to illustrate the meaningful selectivity we use in deciding which of our layers we peel back to show the world and which we keep concealed. As always, color is a technique, a tool, and a language I use to emphasize an overall feeling.

Although greatly diverse - like the portrait subjects themselves - these paintings are unified by their manipulated shapes, gradation, and textures that evoke empathy and curiosity. My hope is to inspire an appreciation in our community for what makes each of us unique so we can learn to look beyond labels and truly see one another.



Inner Fire / Family Rock / Regal / Passive, 30 x22.5 in, Pastel on Arches paper

Declaración del artista: Virmarie DePoyster

"¿De dónde eres?"

"¿Tienes tu tarjeta de residencia?"

"¿Eres una verdadera artista?"

Un día en mis zapatos.

Nosotros, como humanos, hemos estado haciendo suposiciones y prejuizándonos mutuamente como un medio para entendernos mejor, desde el principio de los tiempos. Después de ser constantemente etiquetada como extranjera por mi acento y frívola por mi profesión, comencé a preguntarme cómo las etiquetas y los juicios que otros nos imponen influyen en nuestras identidades.

Con los años me he dado cuenta de que las etiquetas que nos asignamos tienen el poder de dividirnos o unirnos. Recientemente, comencé a preguntarme sobre las experiencias que otros han tenido al ser etiquetados incorrectamente, y decidí pedirles a amigos y extraños en mi comunidad que consideraran ser entrevistados y fotografiados para una pintura. Se le pidió a cada uno que trajeran un artículo o que representaran una persona que ilustrara cómo se veían a sí mismos. Durante estas entrevistas, exploramos cuestiones de identidad y conexión a través de conversaciones profundas sobre las etiquetas importantes que han afectado sus vidas.

Estos retratos en colores pastel tienen como objetivo ilustrar la selectividad significativa que usamos para decidir cuál de nuestras capas retiramos para mostrar al mundo y cuál mantenemos oculta. Como siempre, el color es una técnica, una herramienta y un lenguaje que uso para enfatizar un sentimiento general.

Aunque son muy diversas, como los sujetos de estos retratos, estas pinturas están unificadas por sus formas manipuladas, gradación y texturas que evocan empatía y curiosidad. Mi esperanza es inspirar un aprecio en nuestra comunidad por lo que nos hace únicos para que podamos aprender a mirar más allá de las etiquetas y realmente vernos el uno al otro.

Exhibited works / Obras expuestas:

Cover:
Empathetic
Artist
Native Puerto Rican
Immigrant
20" h x 25.5" w
Pastel on Canson paper
2020

True to Self
Well Read
Not Done Yet
Rebellious
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Visionary Designer
Passionate
Glow of Success
One in a Million Chance
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Easily Moved
Compassionate
Kind
Against the Grain
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Portada:
Empática
Artista
Puertorriqueña nativa
Immigrante
20" h x 25.5" w
Pastel sobre papel Canson
2020

Fiel a sí mismo
Bien leído
No realizado todavía
Rebelde
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Diseñador visionario
Apasionado
Resplandor de éxito
Una en un millón de posibilidades
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Sensible
Compasivo
Amable
A contrapelo
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Hog Farmer's Daughter *Immigrant*
Nurse *Missionary*
Mother of 7 *World Traveler*
Not recognized as a couple
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Luminous
Unencumbered
Tenacious
Longs for Inclusion
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Design Diva
Mentor
Salsa Dancer
Unapproachable
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Inner Fire
Family Rock
Regal
Passive
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Hija de un agricultor de cerdos *Immigrante*
Enfermera *Misionero*
Madre de siete *Viajero del mundo*
No son reconocidos como esposos
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Luminosa
Libre de cargas
Tenaz
Anhela estar incluida
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Diva del Diseño
Mentora
Bailarina de salsa
Inaccesible
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Fuego Interno
La Roca de la familia
Regia
Pasiva
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020



True to Self / Well Read / Not Done Yet / Rebellious, 30 x 22.5 in, Pastel on Arches paper

*Happy-go-lucky
Mama Bear to 5
Pastry Chef
Alzheimer's Caregiver
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020*

*Strong like the Mountain
Smells of Coffee
Head of Family
The Quiet One
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel, charcoal on Arches paper
2020*

*93, Natural Wonder
Determined
Energizer Bunny
Widow
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020*

*Celebrated Musician
Culinary Trained
Them / They
Disabled
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020*

*Despreocupada
Mamá Osa a Cinco
Chef Pastelera
Cuidadora de su madre, enferma de Alzheimer
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020*

*Fuerte como una montaña
Olores de café
Jefe de familia
El Callado
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel y carboncillo sobre papel Arches
2020*

*93, Maravilla natural
Determinada
Conejito de Energizer
Viuda
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020*

*Música Celebre
Licenciatura en Ciencias Culinarias
Ellos / Los
Discapacitada
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020*

Exotic
Caregiver
Salsa Dancer
Reserved
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Caring
Wildly creative
Kind
Closeted
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Trustworthy
Kind
Loves harmonies
Soft
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Optimistic
Fearless
Bold
Selfless caregiver
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Exótica
Enfermera
Bailarina de salsa
Callada
30" h x 22.5"
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Canñoso
Creativo
Buen corazón
No Declarado
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Buen Amigo
Canñoso
Le encanta cantar
Delicado
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Optimista
Sin Miedo
Atrevida
Cuidadora "quemada"
30" h x 22.5" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Brotherly
Thoughtful
Loving
Odd
30" h x 22.5"
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Loved
True to Self
Peaceful
Not good enough
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel on Arches paper
2020

Fraternal
Pensativo
Cariñoso
Extraño
30" h x 22.5"
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020

Querido
Fiel a sí mismo
Tranquilo
No ser suficientemente bueno
22.5" h x 30" w
Pastel sobre papel Arches
2020



Trustworthy / Kind/ Loves harmonies/ Soft, 30 x 22.5 in, Pastel on Arches paper



True to Self / Well Read / Not Done Yet / Rebelious, 30 x 22.5 in, Pastel on Arches paper

Virmarie DePoyster's pastel portraits encourage our empathy, asking us to examine our subconscious biases and the way we draw conclusions from others' appearances. Her subjects are endearingly depicted in joyous colors with an innate openness that allows us to easily connect to these strangers. This connection is made more intimate by the inclusion of the subjects' own descriptors, whether how they feel they really are or how they would like to be seen. The ensuing self-reflection is inevitable and supported by DePoyster's invitation for viewers to participate by leaving behind their own labels on a wall of the exhibit. How do people see you, how would you like to be seen, and how vast is the space between?

Jessica Lenehan
Curator



The Arts & Science Center has three aspects of collecting and exhibition: art of the Delta, art by Arkansas artists, and art by African American artists.

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