

Exhibit held in memory of late 'U' Holocaust expert



Two women look at a piece of art on Friday at the Voice to Vision art exhibit at the Regis Center for Art. The exhibit allowed artists to collaborate with genocide survivors and tell their stories through paintings, drawings and mixed media.

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Last March, Stephen Feinstein and David Feinberg were eating lunch while planning the Voice to Vision art exhibit . When Feinberg got an e-mail the next day informing him that Feinstein had died suddenly, he was stunned.

“I said this is a joke, it’s gotta be a joke — I’m working on the stuff we talked about while we ate lunch,” Feinberg said.

Feinberg, a University art professor and director of the Voice to Vision exhibit, said the show was dedicated to Feinstein, former director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Now on display at the Regis Center for Art , Voice to Vision allowed artists to collaborate with genocide survivors and tell their stories through paintings, drawings and mixed media.

Feinstein and Feinberg had known each other through their mutual interest in collecting antique toys and trains, Feinberg said, but it was Feinstein’s enthusiasm for Voice to Vision that brought them together.

“I called him and said, ‘I have this idea for a project,’ and without me even explaining it he said, ‘Let’s do it,’ ” Feinberg said.

He added that the project, which has been in the works for six years, evolved from his own work.

Feinberg said people were “stunned” by a piece he showed at a faculty art show years ago that depicted a woman being hanged by the Nazis. This made him realize that art can remind people to keep these issues on the table, he said.

He began working with genocide survivors because they “were still alive and still had a story,” he said.

Faculty, art students, community artists, musicians, videographers and genocide survivors participated in the project.

“We collaborated with many different disciplines and, most importantly, generations,” he said.

For one of Feinberg’s mixed media pieces, “Journey,” Holocaust survivors were asked to choose objects that reminded them of experiences they had before the Third Reich and after the end of World War II. Artists worked with them to incorporate the objects into the piece.

Feinberg emphasized that the goal of the exhibit was to convey the experiences of survivors in a way that would evoke an emotional response in viewers.

“Unless we can engage people emotionally about these issues of genocide, there is no hope for the future,” said Ellen Kennedy , interim director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

People can’t feel the experiences of the survivors just through recitations of facts, she added.

The work of guest artists Aviel Goodman, Diane Goodman and Esther Malabel was also featured.

Goodman created a photo montage for each survivor he worked with. He said he hopes to evoke in viewers the feeling of survivors’ experiences.

“The unconscious part of our mind works visually — it’s a way to access people’s emotional lives,” he said.

Stacey Holloway , a graduate sculpture student, said she came to the show “to get that feeling about how this happened, how these people felt.”

Feinberg said he wanted the people who see the work to become extensions of the survivors, recalling Feinstein’s concern that their experiences are “just footnotes that get smaller and smaller as generations go by, until they disappear from the text entirely.”

He said he wants to see the opposite happen so that these issues stay on the table and get talked about. And he said this happens through art — “One’s interpretation of what’s wrong and how to make it right.”

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