

## 'Now That You're Here' overcomes social distancing

Senior art show opens as a website and book

By EMILY PAWLOWSKI



Chloe Thompson, Hannah Waltz, Jan Laskowski and Mary Newenhisen are four of the twelve contributors to the senior art show.

Taylor's switch to online classes may have closed its gallery, but its seniors have still found a way to share their art.

"Now That You're Here" showcases the work of the senior art students. This year, 12 graphic artists, illustrators and photographers teamed up to create a unique show.

Like every year, the seniors had spent the semester planning and putting together the show. However, just a few weeks before it was set to open, students were sent home due to COVID-19.

"I think I can speak for all of us when I say there was a lot of disappointment and frustration in the loss of an opportunity that we had all been waiting for the last 3.5 years," said senior Chloe Thompson. "When we had our first meeting after spring break, though, the atmosphere was so positive. As graphic artists, we're all visual problem-solvers — the next step was just the next big problem to solve, and we were eager to get started."

This year's group of seniors were illustrators Ben Kiers, Sarah Brennan and Mary Newenhisen; photographers Jan Laskowski and Jazmin Tuscani; and graphic designers Chloe Thompson, Abigail Gonzalez, Erin Hetrick, Hannah Waltz, Jackie Hilger, Andrea Leon and Weston Poling.

Through weekly Zoom meetings, they agreed on a three-part approach to sharing their art: a website, book and social media presence. The website gave visitors an easy place to see everybody's work and portfolios, while the book gave them a personal way to remember the experience. Accounts across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and even LinkedIn helped promote the show.

"I think the solution of a 'three-pronged' approach was exceptionally clever — the website is fun and energetic, the social media strategy pushed a lot of traffic to the site and the book allowed for the seniors to retain a physical aspect to the show," said Ryan James, assistant professor of art.

While the changes to the show were fairly recent, the name had been picked out near the beginning of planning for the show.

The group settled on “Now That You’re Here” to express both the current moment and the anticipation of what is to come, which they felt reflected their experiences as seniors. They also saw it as an invitation to guests to share in the moment and enjoy their art.

While they never could have accounted for it, this name aptly fit the change in direction the show took as well. It was a long journey to where the seniors are today, but they still found a way to meet us here.

“My classmates and I were all devastated when quarantine started,” Leon said. “We all had amazing plans and work almost ready to show on our exhibition in Metcalf. However, God definitely had bigger plans for us. I’m so proud of each and every one of them for their hard work and flexibility to adapt within difficult circumstances!”

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