

MEDIA CONTACTS

Sarah Wertheimer ▪ 941-404-5710 ▪ sarah@embracingourdifferences.org

Su Byron ▪ 941-955-8103 ▪ subyron@verizon.net

University Student from North Carolina Wins The "People's Choice Award" At 2022 Embracing Our Differences' Exhibit

Alexis Thompson's work, "Threat?" was voted "People's Choice Award" by visitors to the exhibit. Thompson received a \$1,000 cash award.

(April 26, 2022) "At what age do Black men and women become a threat to society?" asks Alexis Thompson, a university student at North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University from Roxboro, North Carolina, and the winner of this year's "People's Choice Award" at Embracing Our Differences' 19th annual outdoor juried art exhibit celebrating diversity. Thompson, who is studying graphic design, received a cash award of \$1,000 for her work entitled, "Threat?" which depicts a young Black man holding an infant on his lap. The words "At What Age Do I Become a Threat?" loom behind him.

Thompson says she was initially motivated to create the piece after Breonna Taylor was killed by police during the execution of a no-knock warrant in 2020. She says she wants to create art that helps give a voice to those who need it. "My goal is to make others feel included and that they have a legacy to leave behind. How can we make this a better world to live in?"

Sarah Wertheimer, executive director of Embracing Our Differences, says that the People's Choice award is determined by a survey that was available to the 371,256

visitors who attended this year's exhibit, January 15 through April 10. She adds that "Threat?" received far more votes than all of the artwork in the exhibit.

"'Threat?' is such a powerful—and empowering—work of art," she says. "People reacted to it strongly. The struggle for racial justice has exposed serious fault lines in our society and this work boldly addresses that. It's also a plea—a call for justice—and it fits EOD's values perfectly: Let's continue to work together to eliminate the barriers of prejudice that hold back the full range of human potential. Each one of us holds the key to open the door to love, compassion and understanding."

According to Wertheimer, this year's attendance marks a major milestone. "We had 371,256 people visit the Bayfront Park exhibit this year," she says. "That's 117,000 more people than last year."

For 19 years, Embracing Our Differences has drawn on the passion and perception of artists, students, writers and others to create powerful statements of diversity and acceptance in its annual outdoor public art exhibition consisting of 50 billboard-sized works of art and accompanying quotes. The scale and impact of this outdoor exhibition has continued to grow, attracting more than four million visitors since its inception. This exhibit is the heart of a year-round program of activities designed to use art as a catalyst to create awareness and promote diversity. **Next year's Bayfront Park exhibit runs January 18-March 13, 2023. In addition, for the first time, the exhibit will also be displayed at Butler Park in North Port, March 22-April 19, 2023; and at State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota, April 26-May 29, 2023.**

For more information, call 941-404-5710 or visit www.embracingourdifferences.org.

About Embracing Our Differences

Embracing Our Differences is a nonprofit organization that uses the transformational power of art and education to celebrate and promote the diversity of the human family. It accomplishes this through an annual, large-scale outdoor juried art exhibition and a comprehensive series of educational initiatives, programs and resources designed for teachers and students. Visit www.embracingourdifferences.org.