

Charity Johnson
2021
"Memories Broken"

When I was told to pick a memory from my childhood, the only one that haunts my mind is of my father. I knew right away how I wanted to make this piece. I went back to my old family home and collected materials. I got moss from the river I spent countless nights sleeping beside, a chair I played on growing up, and the rope I would use to make swings as a kid. The sticks were found alongside the road to class. The "trailer" in the middle is casted aluminum. I originally made a model out of cardboard to cast, but this was my first ever mold. It didn't turn out the way most people would want, but I think it tells the story better the way it is. When putting everything together I used hot glue and wire for stability. All the materials I used were what most would consider garbage, and that's why I wanted to use them. Because when I look back at where I grew up, no one expected me to be who I am now. This piece is a representation of my childhood, and each piece has a very specific purpose. The chair symbolizes years of abuse, the sticks represent all the lies I've told to protect my family, and rope represents my love for building that held me together.

When Critiquing this piece, I immediately looked at the contrast of the black chair against the white wall. I wanted it to really pop out. I feel like the overall look is very strong, but from a distance I noticed I couldn't see the center as well. The rope wrapping around the piece and the sticks protruding from the sides really gives it a sense of movement and tension. I wanted the viewer to feel like if they got too close they might get hurt. I feel like the color palette I used blended well together and nothing is too distracting, but I do wish I added a little more brightness to the center. The mesh wrapping around the "trailer" adds depth, without that the center would be a little lacking. The texture on the chair also adds to the idea of a fading memory. You can tell it has been through some rough times. Overall I was very pleased with how everything came out.

I wanted to show the truth behind a broken home. I came from a very low income family. There were many months I spent without running water or electricity. My dad was addicted to drugs, so I spent most of my time struggling to get by. This piece represents one of the hardest points of my life. When I was around 10 years old, I was woken up by the sound of glass breaking. My dad had thrown my mom against the dresser in my room, and I thought for sure she was going to die this time. The only reason he stopped is because I screamed out his name. My mom and I were able to make it out of the house through the back door of the trailer and we ran into the woods to our neighbors house. No matter how bad he beat her she would always go back. I swore to myself that I would become something more than where I came from. The one thing that held me together was art. It gave me something to pour my emotions into after being silent for years. This is the reason I became an artist. The person who inspired me to make this piece was Jeremy Colbert. He also struggled with abuse as a child, and had to deal with a lot growing up. He made a piece called "Relocation" and it gave me the push I needed to talk about my past. It reminded me that I can give people the same hope I have, through my art.

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Jeremy Colbert