

Impact Statement

Emily Leonard, Grade 8.

Future of the Sea, 2023.

Assemblage sculpture, 15 x 17 x 11 inches.

LaVilla School of the Arts, Jacksonville, FL

Unsung Hero: Sylvia Earle

I live near the beach and often see lots of pollution and cannot help but feel like the world has gone to utter chaos with our world dying at our very fingertips and all we have to blame is ourselves. Because of my experience Sylvia Earle stuck out to me as I'm sure she feels the same way for she spent a lot of her life spreading awareness about the damages, we as people have on sea life. She believes if we educate the public more than people will pay more attention to the impact they have. Hoping we can alter the negatives into positives, starting with picking up trash.

Of course, to understand the piece you have to understand her, Sylvia Earle was an oceanographer and marine biologist. Although discovering different corals is spectacular more importantly, she spread awareness about issues related to the sea. She created a documentary and founded mission blue. She has traveled throughout America spreading concern through lectures and books and describing her time in the sea and how we can help maintain the beauty of it. She has been in waters so deep that its hard to believe she is human, according to Mariana Brandman a NWHM Predoctoral Fellow in Women's History she spent over seven thousand hours under the sea over her life and won many awards including Times magazine first hero for the planet in 1998. I wanted to express how she saw the world through her eyes or whether goggles in this case.

Sylvia saw such beautiful arrangements of assorted bright colored rock like animals with all sorts of crazy features that if I described it to anyone, they would assume I am speaking about aliens, but I am not, I am actually speaking about coral and how unusual it is yet very lovely. I built goggles that are surrounded by polluted coral reefs and within the goggles there is a healthy coral reef glistening with saturated pigments and this is only the smallest portion of the vision she saw and how amazing the untouched and undisturbed reefs can be but they can all be this great if issues such as pollution and over fishing were brought down then not only the waters would be saved but it would help the earth as we know it in ways greater then you can think because picking up just one piece of trash can have a huge impact on wild life.

The process was very long but most definitely rewarding, over all the total hours I spent on the piece was around 40 hours, but it is just a small percentage of time when you look at the big picture. I plan to showcase this at local galleries such as my school if they will let me or my parents' art store near the beach. This project opened my eyes about the amount of pollution all around me and now I can't help but start picking up trash when I see it which seems like a very small change but if I can get everyone to think like this then pollution could be very limited and we could start preserving more of our beaches and keeping them clean or even possible making them even cleaner. I am in the process of making a few social media pages to showcase different issues as well as the art I make to help encourage other to possibly make art out of

trash like I did even if it just one plastic bottle or spreading awareness about other issues. There is a video link of the process in more depth and behind the scenes as well.