

Impact Statement

Evelin Jimenez, Grade 11.

Sculpting Justice, 2024.

Pastel, collage on paper, 11 x 14 inches.

Claremore High School, Claremore, OK

Unsung Hero: Elizabeth Catlett

I found this hero through the pre-approved list, but Elizabeth caught my eye as she was an artist like me. Elizabeth was an African American sculptor who knew that there were many problems going on in the world, the biggest one for her being racism. She decided that instead of just being against racism, she would use her talent to talk about it and show it through an artist's view. Most of her artworks were focused on black children and women.

I admire Elizabeth as she did not stay quiet about the problems going on against black people. She found her own way and that way was something that she knew well about. I wanted to express that through my artwork. She sculpted away the stories and struggles that African Americans had in America, with not just racism but maybe poverty and social classes. I also admire her art in that she used a lot of boldness and color to make it stand out. She was also amazing with her use of contrast, as she knew when to make certain objects or people stand out in her artwork. Her artwork felt geometrical with the help of shapes and lines.

I wanted to express how she used her artwork, and I did that by depicting her as sculpting into the story of African Americans. I added a scalpel on the side to show that's all she needed to sculpt away. I also wanted to add some old newspapers about slavery and how society back then thought of black people as the enemy and the "major problem" that America had going on in the country. In some of those newspapers were some hateful words against African Americans that were prominent in old America and were thought of as normal. I wanted to show how Catlett did not agree, and instead spoke through her art about how dehumanizing it was to not be treated like any other human being in the world just because of their race. I made the people working on the farms a bit more illustrative, as a way of saying that she was telling a story. A story that was extremely common and lots of people have gone through. The endless line of African Americans was made to depict exactly that. Lots of black people were used as slaves for farms and just as personal gain for slave owners. I wanted my artwork to show how slavery was common and how Catlett showed that through her art.

The process of this artwork showed me how you cannot just spread awareness through your voice, but also through artwork. Whether that is an illustration, a sculpture, a journal, or a song, you can still explain to others how exactly a subject can be a problem. Share it with others and talk about it. If you want a change in the world, don't just sit back and let it happen. With that I will share my artwork through my school's art shows that are not just open to our school but also open to the public. I will also share my artwork with social media letting anyone who wants to see it be able to. I am glad to be able to share how Elizabeth Catlett was also some help in society even if it was just one voice, she was one of many and that was enough.