

Kira Wu

Artist statement:

The photo-montage I have submitted to the Open the Doors Campaign, KFA Art Contest is titled "Thread". "Thread" is constructed from multiple photographs I documented as an instructor of a course taught in 2014, called "Artistic Practice in the Community". In the span of one semester, we worked with the City of Surrey, Langley Hospice Society, Surrey International Children's Festival, SOFIA Art Collective, and Surrey Art Gallery. While thinking on the theme posed by the KFA, of various ways that education transform lives and learning, I was drawn to these photographs of my students hard at work painting murals, to make a mark in their community.

I called this photo-montage "Thread" because the students in the image are working together to put themselves out into the community. The link between them is the thread of colours weaving in and out through their hands creating the work. I chose these images as a way to acknowledge the Artistic Practice in the Community course, which lingered in my mind as being one of the most transformative experiences in my (over 15yrs) teaching career at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Teaching this class reinforced my belief that art matters in our community, not only for the artist but also for the people who see the work. Several partnerships formed with organizations like the City of Surrey, who was looking for art for the City Beautification and Place-making Projects. This opportunity gave the students a chance to propose, build and paint large-scale murals to be displayed on a wall outside the Newton Arena. Public interactions with the murals would encourage dialogue, and add colour to the landscape.

Acknowledgements:

The large mural depicted in this photograph is called "Untitled" (Acrylic on panel; 2014), was designed and painted by KPU Fine Art students; Cayley Carlson, Jess Orrin, Hailey Logan, Shandis Harrison, Andres Salaz