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A Space for Trust: Discussing Creativity, Exposure, and Relationship with Peers at Point Park University

By Audrey Shull



April Fridges giving welcome speech at the opening show. Photo by Audrey Shull

The idea of trust is a good starting point for this year's exhibition, which allows artists to expose themselves and their stories, build relationships with other people and discover how it feels to rely on them. The number of interpretations makes *A Space for Trust* a rich and diverse collection of the views that will resonate with the audience.

On March 6, 2025, Point Park University held its eighth annual juried exhibition, *A Space for Trust*, with an opening reception featuring live music at Artists Image Resource (AIR) in Pittsburgh. The exhibition was curated by local professional photographers Sue Abramson and Jake Reinhart and featured 33 works by 13 students across different disciplines, including photography, film production, public relations, advertising, multimedia, dance and broadcasting.

The student artists who participated in the project included Kameron Barnard, Ka’Ori Frazier, Sydney Frencho, Danny Herz, Leslie Krebs, Emily López Wolfe, Madeline Marco, Jackelin Mejia, Maelen Meyers, Alex Olszewski, Jake Pleins, Ava Popowitz and Jenny Stevens brought different approaches to the exhibition. Their works are presented in different media and demonstrate both technical proficiency and internal depth.

Christopher Denver, a junior, majoring in photography, appreciated the exhibition.

“I think there’s some seriously quality work here. I think that some of the students who aren’t as familiar with the program can kind of see what we are capable of. And I think it’s really incredible and it goes to show the hard work that they put in,” he said.

One of the best pieces of the show were Sydney Frencho’s *SYNTHESIZED* from the series *Fragments of Self*. The piece stands out from the rest of the works due to the artist’s usage of different media and textures to enhance the prints.

“I think she’s done an incredible job. We have a class together and I did see this in class. She got constant applause and lots of compliments and it’s very well deserved. What she’s done with this piece is pretty incredible. Bringing the third dimension into photography is something that’s quite hard to do. She’s done it really well”–Denver said of the work of fellow student Sydney Frencho.



SYNTHESIZED by Sydney Frencho Photo by Audrey Shull

The opening reception was attended by students, faculty, local artists, and Pittsburgh art community members. The artists were able to interact with the public and share stories about their artwork and the process behind it. The discussion was about trust, and the questions ranged from people's individual experiences to more general social issues.

Another junior in the photography program, Jordan Kullen, spoke about the variety of the exhibition: "I think it's very cool to see the different types of art, different types of concepts and themes chosen by the young artists."

The physical space of the exhibition also captured the idea of the show. The space of AIR with its bare walls and high ceiling created an industrial and close environment that would make the works presented more poignant. The curatorial decisions made it easy for the visitor to flow from one work that portrays trust to another without forcing them to think about it.

A Space for Trust is not just a display, it is a performance, a performance that challenges the viewer to think about the role of trust and vulnerability in their life. The students have successfully presented an impressive display of work that is not only beautiful but also stimulating to the mind.

Denvers said he would recommend the exhibition to others interested in checking out student-driven art projects.

"Yeah, I absolutely would. Honestly, this room is pretty packed, but I think there should be more people here. If people saw what the photo students here are capable of and the hard work that they put in and the great talent that we have within our program, I think they would be amazed and I think that they would continue to come back every year."

For those who were unable to attend the opening, the exhibition will be on display until March 14, 2025 at AIR and the public is invited to come and view the pieces up close. The event is free and therefore easily accessible to anyone who wants to view some contemporary art and what new talents exist.

In *A Space for Trust*, Point Park University is further establishing itself as an institution that supports artistic achievement and provides a stage for young artists to voice themselves. This juried exhibition is a clear example of how art can help modern people to understand themselves and their relationships and make an impression on everyone who attends.