

THE SILENT BATTLE BEHIND A SMILE



MEGAN

(she/her)

Everyone faces an internal, silent battle that they conceal out of fear of judgment, being seen as less, or placing a burden on others. My inspiration for this piece came from personal experience, as someone who often bottles everything up until I reach my breaking point. My greatest fear, as I am sure is shared by many, is being perceived as less or weak when vulnerable. I chose to participate in this magnified voices expressive art because I saw it as an opportunity to remind others, as I often have to remind myself, you are not a burden, you are not unloved for struggling, you are worth so much more than how others perceive you, you are not weak, and you are not alone. Our differences and imperfections are what make us the strongest and best version of ourselves that we can be.

My piece illustrates the tendency to put on a brave face and smile to conceal our internal pain and struggles. I have personally put on a brave face to mask my thoughts out of concern of what others would think of me, so that I wouldn't come across as someone who was insecure and overly concerned about what others thought of me. We as humans tend to bottle things up to a point where we just start to break, feel so small, and want to rip our hair out since we get so frustrated and emotionally distraught that we don't know anything other than to put on a brave face for those around us and not let them see beneath our surface. Throughout this piece, my main goal was to express that it is okay to care about others' opinions, but never let them get to a point where they consume you or make you feel the need to fake your true identity.

