

## Creating Art for Human Trafficking Awareness

By Jennifer Fischer



Conveying a message about human trafficking that is impactful and truthful in a work of art can be difficult. Trafficking can be pretty ugly subject matter, while one of the main purposes of art is to be beautiful. However, aside from decorating the world, art is also a powerful tool for spreading information and inspiring social change.

While creating your piece, keep in mind both the message you are trying to convey, as well as the artistry with which you are trying to convey it.

An important first step to creating your piece is to decide what your overall message will be. Is it a positive message of hope and freedom to survivors? A call to action?

General awareness of human trafficking? Human trafficking prevention? Is your piece going to reflect a specific type of trafficking or a specific aspect to trafficking? Through your research into this issue, find the piece of the issue that affects you the most, that you have a strong connection to in some way. Your understanding of the issue, and your passion to bring awareness to it, will be conveyed in your work.

Once you have determined your message, the basic principles (movement, unity, harmony, variety, balance, contrast, proportion, rhythm) and elements (texture, form, space, shape, color, value, line) of art will assist in making your message accessible to the viewer. For example, the colors you choose are elemental in setting the mood of your piece. Bright colors can emphasize a message of hope and freedom, while dark, murkier colors can emphasize sadness, fear, or danger. Contrast can produce a similar effect, with high contrast promoting a powerful message of strength and resilience, while a lower contrast can hint at sadness and despair.

Here are some useful tips on creating art for the purposes of raising awareness of human trafficking in your community and in the world.

### RESEARCH

- Do your homework! There is a lot of good, bad, and questionable information about human trafficking. Find reliable resources that give a full picture of what human trafficking is, and how it is affecting communities in your town and around the world.
- Check out what others have done. There is a rich community of anti human trafficking advocates across the country, many have coordinated art shows. Check out examples of other people's work, and let it help to inspire you to come up with your own idea. (For inspiration only, no copying!)

## **PICK A SUBJECT OR THEME**

- You can choose a type of human trafficking to focus on, or you can take a broader approach. There are many types of human trafficking, mainly commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, often called “sex trafficking” and “labor trafficking”. Within labor trafficking, there are many industries in which a person can be trafficked. Common industries and professions include; agriculture, food manufacturing, clothing manufacturing, restaurants, commercial cleaning, and domestic servitude.
- You can choose an element to human trafficking that you feel the most strongly about. The main elements to trafficking are force, fraud, and coercion. There can be other factors as well, which you will discover in your research.

## **CREATE**

- Use creativity, symbolism, artistry, and the principles and elements of art to convey one or more of the three following themes; a positive message of hope and freedom to survivors, a call to action and general awareness, and/or human trafficking prevention.
- Remember your audience. What is your message, who are you trying to say it to?
- You can choose the tone of your piece. It can be shocking by using images of trafficking; or it can be hopeful by using images that represent rescue, restoration, and hope.
- Your piece can be more abstract, or very concrete. You can be literal, or more metaphorical. You do not necessarily need to draw a picture of a person being trafficked. There are many creative ways that you can approach this challenge.

Good luck!

*Jennifer Fischer works for the Sacramento Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking Regional Program. During her time with the program, she has coordinated art shows throughout Sacramento and the surrounding areas in order to promote human trafficking awareness through art. An artist herself, she is committed to addressing humanitarian issues through art, and is eager to see that torch passed on to youth artists. Art from Sacramento Rescue and Restore’s events can be seen at <http://sacramentorescueandrestore.net/art/> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/SacramentoRescueandRestore>.*