Rosen's "Stories" exhibit captures emotion in storytelling

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Sophie Rosen '19 has a love for psychology and art. Inspired by the unique stories that follow every one of us, Rosen sought to capture the facial expressions that surface only with passionate verbal recollection.

In order to get a closer look into her goals and ideas for "Stories," the Concordiensis sat down with Rosen and discussed her inspirations and techniques.

Abigail Marin: What was your inspiration for your art?

Sophie Rosen: My inspiration for my art is honestly people. I'm so fascinated by portraiture, but I'm even more so interested in what a viewer can take away from looking at any given picture.

I've always had a passion for psychology and listening to people talk, so for that reason I decided to combine portraiture and psychology to create this series.

For this particular project, I originally wanted to take a single picture of each model talking about something they're passionate about. However, my first model, Gillian Singer, came in and after ranting about Donald Trump, she began telling me about a very personal, sensitive topic that resulted in her crying.

This was the moment I decided to change my entire series to be about people's personal stories.

It was hard at first taking pictures of one of my best friends crying, but there was something so beautiful about her tears that I was honored to capture. She is the person I decided to dedicate this project to.

AM: Why did you decide to use photography as your medium for this exhibit?

SR: I have always been attracted to the medium of photography since I was in middle school and saw how clear someone could capture a moment through a lens.

Photography is my medium of choice because I love how realistic it is, and for this project I wanted the emotions that were being portrayed to be as raw as possible.

As beautiful as other mediums of art can be, I think there's something special about capturing a moment just as it is, just as it is happening through photography.

AM: What is the message that you want to convey through this exhibit?

SR: The main message I wanted to convey through this project is that every single person has a story behind them.

No matter how happy, smiley, and put together a person may seem, no one really knows what has happened in someone's life or what they're going through at that moment.

Talking to my 20 models, I learned so many things about so many people that I never would have imagined possible if I hadn't sat down with them and asked them to tell whatever story they consider to be theirs.

AM: How did you choose the subjects of your photos?

SR: Many of my models are some of my good friends, however, I really wanted to open it up and ask people to model for me that I may never have had real conversations with beforehand.

I think this really emphasized my reasoning for this project, because I wanted to learn what seemingly perfect people might actually be thinking about or what they have gone through.

Hearing these stories be talked about that I had never heard prior to the session made the photos that much more genuine and overall incredibly impactful.

AM: Why is it called Stories?

SR: I decided to call this series "Stories" because the whole project was just as simple as that. I had people come into the studio wearing whatever they wanted, to simply sit on a stool with a camera pointed at them.

The only instructions they were given were to "tell a story that has happened to you and talk to the camera." Everyone has a story, and I thought that the title is the perfect fit for such a simple, yet impactful series of photographs.