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Latin art reflects struggles

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When walking into the Curry Student Center art gallery, students are greeted by various pieces of art by members of the Latin American Student Organization (LASO) and Boston's inner-city Latino youth.

The exhibit is displayed as part of Hispanic Heritage Month and will be displayed through Friday.

Vice president of LASO Victor Morales said that while each piece of work has its own individual motif, the main theme of the exhibit is transcultural assimilation of first generation Hispanic Americans in the United States.

"For me, something that doesn't get a lot of focus in the Latino community is art," he said. "We wanted to do something original, and the contemporary pieces are from a younger generation showing their relation to their ethnic culture."

On one side of the exhibit are framed poems that demonstrate Latino pride and overcoming different types of adversity, like the loss of a loved one. On another side are various paintings depicting nature like trees and fields along with paintings of Hispanic youth. Tear drops from construction paper are displayed on another wall, inscribed with poems, personal thoughts, prayers and reflections.

In addition, several dioramas are on display, each with its own individual theme. Some are a tribute to victims of cancer, violence and deceased relatives while others show the artists' religious beliefs and ethnic traditions.

Most of the work was contributed by inner-city high school students through Boston-based organizations like Artists for Humanity (AFH), Villa Victoria and Cacique Youth Arts. Many of these students are from the Roxbury community.

Yhinny Matos is the community outreach coordinator for AFH, an after school and summer program that allows high school students to express themselves and earn money through their artwork.

Matos said Northeastern has supported AFH students by providing them with several outlets to showcase their work. Not only has AFH work been displayed in the exhibit gallery, but also on Columbus Avenue and during President Joseph Aoun's inauguration last spring.

"We provide young people with a sustainable way of living through art," Matos said. "And Northeastern has been great and supportive in commissioning us to have our work displayed."

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