

Art On The Bridge: Student Exhibit Gets New Venue

By BILL RINEHART • JUL 21, 2020



One of 20 photographs on display on the Purple People Bridge.

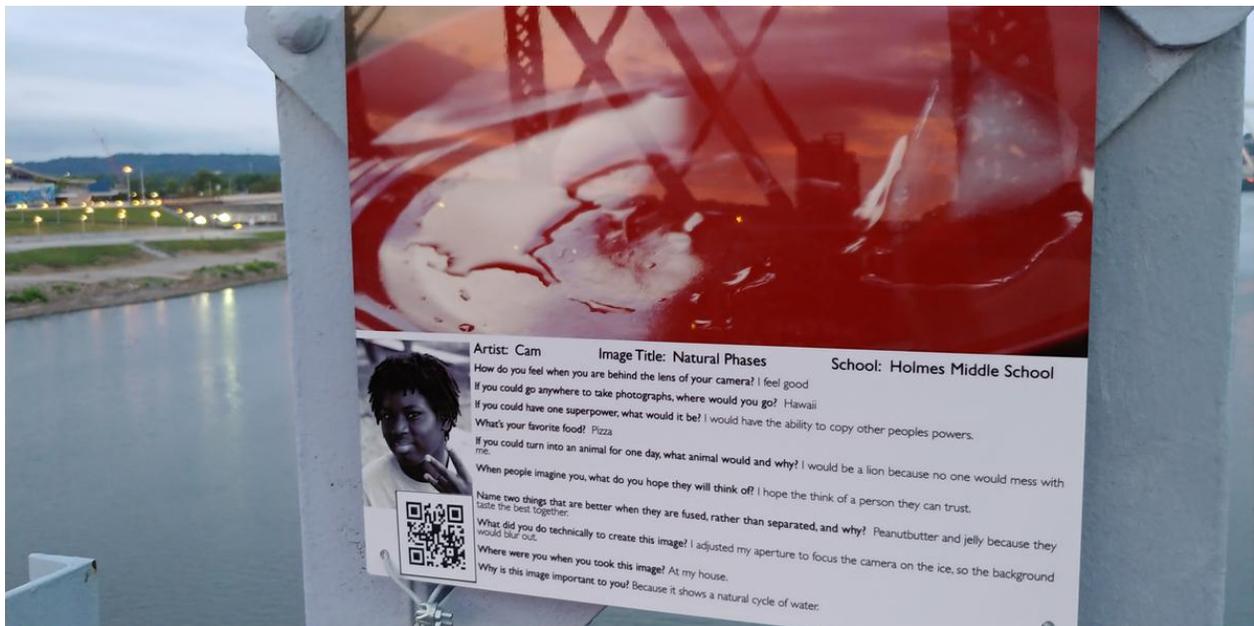
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The Purple People Bridge between Newport and Cincinnati has become an outdoor art gallery this summer. Twenty photographs from local middle and high school students will be on display for the next month. The photographers are all taking part in the Fusion exhibit.

Shannon Eggleston is the founder and CEO of the [i imagine program](#), a non-profit photography education program that aims to teach more than taking pictures. She says it's a journey through art and through "yourself."

Eggleston says students learn about technical details and artistry, along with historical and modern techniques. "The other 50% then is how to see yourself with some of those same characteristics. How can you tell your own story through photographs? We really try to get kids used to stopping everything and taking a moment and looking inside of themselves," she says. "Really kind of discovering themselves, for a lot of the kids."

Like a lot of things, the coronavirus pandemic interrupted the i imagine program. Eggleston says a public exhibition of students' work from the after-school class, and a summer camp, were both canceled. "We had to do something. We couldn't just stop," she says.



The photographs are printed on aluminum and treated so they will stand up to weathering.

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Eggleston issued a challenge to students: Bring two things together in a photograph to highlight their beauty and demonstrate unity. That's the idea behind Fusion. "Some kids take that in a scientific way. Some kids take it in an emotional way, but it gave them something to do," she says.

Fusion was originally scheduled to appear [at this year's FotoFocus show in October](#). Eggleston says when that was canceled it was like a "third punch in the stomach."

But she says FotoFocus - which provided i imagine with a grant to participate in the October show - said she could use the money in "any other way." And that's how the photographs came to be displayed on the Purple People Bridge.

"We could put their pictures in a gallery, which is an awesome idea also. Most galleries are closed right now," Eggleston says. "There's lots of different kinds of people who walk across the Purple People Bridge, and there's not a lot to do right now. We want as many people to see our kids as possible. The bridge would be really a way for people to come together in their own little pause and enjoy some art, whether it's a commute or their exercise routine or just a family outing."

Eggleston says the photographs are printed on sheets of aluminum and coated with a UV resistant chemical so they can stay on display through mid-August.

The photographs on display come from students at Holmes middle and high schools, Gray Middle School and Ignite Institute.