

*****DISCLAIMER!!!*****

THE FOLLOWING IS AN UNEDITED ROUGH DRAFT TRANSLATION FROM THE CART PROVIDER'S OUTPUT FILE. THIS TRANSCRIPT IS NOT VERBATIM AND HAS NOT BEEN PROOFREAD. THIS IS NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT. THIS FILE MAY CONTAIN ERRORS. THIS TRANSCRIPT MAY NOT BE COPIED OR DISSEMINATED TO ANYONE UNLESS PERMISSION IS OBTAINED FROM THE HIRING PARTY. SOME INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN MAY BE WORK PRODUCT OF THE SPEAKERS AND/OR PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AMONG PARTICIPANTS. HIRING PARTY ASSUMES ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECURING PERMISSION FOR DISSEMINATION OF THIS TRANSCRIPT AND HOLDS HARMLESS Texas Closed Captioning, LLC FOR ANY ERRORS IN THE TRANSCRIPT AND ANY RELEASE OF INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN.

*****DISCLAIMER!!!*****

- >> Everyone is so quiet.
- >> We're ready.
- >> We're doing our power thought, right?
- >> That's right.
- >> Sorry, we had interpreter issues.
- >> It's all right.
- >> They're connecting now. Yes, Ma'am, there's one of them. So you can change your name, Nancy, when I put your name in the system, I put a capital A. If you click on the ellipses you can correct that. Let's see -- we're still missing Grant. And Texas Closed Captioning is here. So let me do this. Is that the bottom? Okay.
- >> Yes, looks good.
- >> Okay, got that. I am still missing Grant. Patience, patience. Oh, so it's denim day which is created in response to a 1999 sexual assault ruling in an Italian court which stated that the victim's tight jeans implied consent to rape.
- >> Implied consent? Oh, nice.
- >> So denim day brings awareness to sexual assault and honors survivors who have experienced this trauma.
- >> This is C.C., is anyone who is on the panel right now needing interpreting?
- >> No.
- >> Okay. Just making sure.
- >> And I need to -- add spotlight there.
- >> Hi, guys, this is John and I just got here.
- >> Yes, sir, we see you.
- >> Hi, John.
- >> John, meet Sam.
- >> Hi, Sam.
- >> Hey, John.

>> It's good to meet you.
>> We're just waiting for Grant.
>> We'll give it a few more minutes because we still have -- I have two till. I know that we're coming from a television interview. It was supposed to end at 2:00 and that's why we moved everything to 3:00.
>> We have a lot of people signed up, but we'll see.
>> We did, we had 90 something people registered. Let's see, we had 98 at last count. That's not bad for something so specific.
>> I know, I hope that we have a lot of people show up and that would be nice.
>> There he is! Okay, this is what I'm going to do -- I think we -- Grant, is your Mom going to join us or just be around you if you need to refer to her for something? They just asked if you will be around. If you want her, she'll come.
>> Not necessarily. I just didn't know if I needed to spotlight her video, if she gets on video. I want to make sure that it gets recorded.
>> So, Grant -- Grant, is your last name pronounced Maniér?
>> *Grant Maniér*: Yes, Maniér.
>> All righty.
>> I already sent it in and they called me. Would you email them and let them know that we've got it covered? Email communication by hand and let them know that I sent it directly to the interpreters. Thank you.
>> I have already told them that.
>> Okay. Nancy was concerned.
>> This is Stephanie. I'm going to go ahead and to turn off my -- my -- mute myself. And I'm not seeing the other interpreter. So I will continue until they show up unless they show up before 20 minutes and then, of course, we'll swap out at 20 minutes. Will you be spotlighting us as well?
>> Yes, I was just doing that. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight -- that's perfect because I'm going to turn me off at some point.
>> Okay, and then --
>> Probably nine. So when the other interpreter comes on, I'll watch and you might send me a message in the chat once they get here so I that know that they're here.
>> So the one thing that I didn't do and I apologize is to determine who goes first. So we've got the four of you here. And so who would like to be up first in terms of talking about themselves? Grant? Okay. So Grant is going to be number one. Who wants to be number two? All right, Sam is number two. John and Nancy, which one of you wants to be last? Nancy wants to be three. And so, John, you're the last one.
>> *John Bramblitt*: I had my thing on mute, but that's great though.
>> Whoever is mute side last. [laughter].
>> This is Julie, Grant's mom, hello.
>> Hello.
>> How are you?
>> I'm well. How are you?
>> Good, good. We -- we actually have to be off right at 4:30. So you know that and

so if it goes over we'll excuse ourselves politely.

>> Yeah, I think we're going to try to keep it to an hour and a half. But that's good to know if we lose you that we know that you have gone on. And, Grant, you'll be number one at the top of the clock. And Randy will do her thing, and welcoming everyone. And then I don't know, Randi, will you turn to me to introduce, is that how we do that? Okay, you're muted. All right, so she'll turn it to me and I'll just welcome everyone and then I'm going to introduce you, Grant, and you take it away.

>> *Grant Maniér*: Hokey-dokey.

>> If you are robust and pushing five minutes I'll probably ask you to wrap it up. And then we go to Sam, Sam, what is your last name?

>> *Sam Eiler*: okay.

>> okay. You'll be next, Sam. And then, Nancy, and -- Nancy, do you want to say anything or do you want us to just show your video?

>> *Nancy Wood*: It doesn't matter to me. You can show it with or without the sound, I don't care. You can leave the narration on or I can narrate it while it's on, it doesn't matter.

>> The sound is already set up to come through so we'll leave it like that with the sound on.

>> So what I'll do, Nancy, I will introduce you and you can say hi, I'm Nancy and I have prepared this video for you. And then we'll end with John.

>> Oh, come on. I'm sorry, I need this document moved. Hang on.

>> So is everybody pumped? Y'all ready? [laughter].

>> I'm going to click start webinar which means that people will be able to see and to hear us. And we are on a few Minutes late so I'll go ahead and to do that now.

>> Okay. Give me a second. [laughter] all right. Hello, everyone. And welcome to the accessibility and disability policy webinar series. My name is randi turner and I'm the accessibility and disability rights coordinator here at the Governor's commission for people with disabilities. We're here to learn more about arts and this is a visual arts session and people with disabilities that have actually made a career out of their artwork. I'm going to do a little housekeeping and then a short introduction, again, when I begin recording because we will record this session. Participants' microphones will be off and please put questions in the Q&A Bohn box and at the end of the session we'll take time for questions. So feel free to submit those questions at any time. If there is information for us to share with you, we will put that in the chat box.

But try to keep your questions to the Q&A box. There's several websites for some of the artists that we might put into the chat feature so that you can all have those. This will be recorded and it will be loaded to our YouTube channel. And you will receive an email 24 hours after the session that tells you where to find that recording as well as any materials that are used in this session, including the real-time captioning transcript. The Governor's committee is a committee of five staff, and 12 individuals that are appointed by the Governor, Governor Greg Abbott. Season of those individuals must be -- seven of those individuals must be people with disabilities. You

can apply to be on that committee at the Governor's office, which is gov.tx.gov and go to the appointments link under organizations and if you are interested in our committee or any other, they're always needing people for various kinds of committees. Don't think just because it's not a committee that focuses on disability that your perspective is not needed, because often other groups like education committees, and the emergency management committees, they need that disability perspective. All right. I think that does it for housekeeping. You will notice that on your screen that you can see the PowerPoint and the captioning. We're not going to do much PowerPoint here because the presenters are all going to be sharing stuff within their studios, or if it is on screen, I will put the Power point up but I will take it down when we're not using it. So just know that you can move the vertical bar between the materials and the people -- the speakers, to make the speakers larger, if that is your choice. Okay. I'm going to click "record" and then we will -- I'm going to repeat a little bit and we'll get started. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Randi Turner with the Governor's committee on people with disabilities and welcome to the accessibility and disability policy webinar series. Today we have with us four amazing artists that all have disabilities, and we have also with us Celia Hughes from arts spark, as well as Lucy gross from SAGE studios here in Austin, Texas. So I'm going to turn it over to Celia, and you can get started with the introductions.

>> Welcome, everyone. I am really delighted to be here today. This is one of the fun parts of my job when I get to speak to wonderfully creative artists all around the state who are doing really remarkable things. We're going to hear a little bit from each of them about their artwork, what inspires them, how they have moved forward through Covid and then a little bit about what they're seeing in the future. But we thought that we would start out by introducing each artist and giving them a few minutes to show you their art and to talk to you a little bit so that you have an idea when they start to talk on the panel about who they are as an artist as well as a citizen of Texas. So we're going to start with grant Maniér. And I'm going to just tell you that Grant, just take it away.

>> **Grant Maniér:** All right. Hello, everyone. As you heard my name is Grant Maniér and I'm 25 years old and I'm known as an eco-artist. What is an eco-artist? I reduce, reuse and recycle and then I up-cycle paper materials to create my beautiful eco-art masterpieces like the one that you see behind me. I have been drawing since I was 4 years old. Art was a way of soothing my autism anxieties. And I like colors. And people say that I'm good at it. But officially I have been an artist since 2010 when I won my first rodeo grand championship. And really it all started out as a homeschool art project. And then it quickly turned into a part-time job, and then a full-time job, and now it's an overtime job.

>> Thank you, Grant.

>> Thank you. That is terrific. So can you talk a little bit about it being an overtime job? What does that mean for you?

>> **Grant Maniér:** What I mean by overtime job, I mean, just earlier today I had another interview with KBRC, channel 2 news, and, well, even the day after that I was being

interviewed for Houston Live. And then tomorrow I have another art show.

>> Well, that's good, that's pretty remarkable. You're a pretty busy young man.

>> **Grant Maniér:** Thank you.

>> Is it possible that you could hold up one of the pieces of your artwork and talk a little bit about your process?

>> **Grant Maniér:** Sure. One second. One second. We got one right here.

>> Okay, terrific.

>> **Grant Maniér:** These are my butterflies.

>> Very nice. I see flowers and I see four or five butterflies.

>> **Grant Maniér:** That's right. As an eco-artist I recycle materials such as magazines and wallpaper and posters, business cards, fabrics, books and puzzles and even I use the back of foils on contact lens cases and I also use beads and jewelry to create beautiful eco-art. I start by preparing the canvas and drawing on it and then I prepare my materials and I take my clear glue and brush and I start the process of a masterpiece. You know what the beauty of being an eco-artist is? Once I am done tearing and cutting my paper, I can just clean it up. So that means that I have a studio anywhere and everywhere. I work in my room, in my living room, and in my dining room, and even at hotels when I'm traveling.

>> That's terrific. That's terrific. And it's very -- and it's so wonderful for the environment that you are doing that, because you're recycling things that people would, you know, that maybe would just throw away or not even think about and toss into the trash. So that's really wonderful. Do you put glue all over the canvas and then stick things to it? Or how do you work that?

>> **Grant Maniér:** What I do is I take my clear glue -- in fact, I have some right here. This is the secret sauce -- clear glue. I just take it and I spread it all over the canvas and I take my pieces of paper and I just place them right on. Then, of course, I can glue on top so that it stays down and I layer the papers on top of one another to make sure that they're nice and tight. But I want to show you this real quick -- this is my signature mark. Peeling puzzle pieces.

And I take the puzzle pieces out of the box one at a time and I just simply peel the print. That way it's nice and paper thin. Just like this.

>> So that's your secret ingredient, Grant?

>> **Grant Maniér:** That's right.

And, of course, this is how I use jewelry. Look closely on these dragon flies and you can see the beads and the jewelry that I have used.

>> Lovely. So, Grant, are you inspired by the colors of the material that you are working with when you are -- when you come up with your painting or do you know -- do you have in mind what you want to do a painting of and then you look for the material that gives you that color?

>> **Grant Maniér:** Well, I can find my materials just about anywhere. I can find them in my garage. I can find them at thrift stores like the goodwill and people give us their recyclable materials.

And if the color looks just what I need for my -- for a certain art piece I'm going to use

it. Because I don't use paint. I work with paper. The color is already on the paper.

>> Terrific. So I assume that you are working on several paintings at the same time?

>> **Grant Maniér:** Oh, yes. If I'm working on one piece -- just one piece -- and I don't have the materials that I need or the color that I need at that moment, I can just push it off to the side and just work on the next one until I find what I'm looking for for the other one.

>> Well, that's great. Thank you, Grant. Thank you so much for sharing that with us. We're going to now move on to Sam.

And Sam is going to tell us a little bit about his art.

>> Okay, my name is Sam Eiler.

And when I started to become an artist, I just -- I just started to draw spongebob on my mom's coffee table.

>> So were you drawing it on your mom's coffee table or were you drawing it on a piece of paper on your mom's coffee table?

>> I just carved the table when I was 2 years old.

>> Okay, okay, well that's terrific so she got an idea that maybe you were going to be a woodworker when you grew up. That's terrific.

>> Sam Eiler: actually I'm not a woodworker.

>> So tell us, what is your art and what do you make, Sam?

>> Sam Eiler: I like to make characters and I like to draw SpongeBob and minions and more.

>> Okay, and have you done something with those characters to make them take on a more of a three-dimensional look?

>> No, I haven't. But I did make new characters in my brain, see?

>> Okay. So I understand that you make puppets?

>> Uh-huh.

>> Can we see some of those puppets?

>> Do you see Big Bird in the background?

>> Oh, yeah. Now tell us how you -- bringing up another one, okay. And that one is a shark or a whale?

>> That's just a whale.

>> Oh, okay, just a whale. It looks pretty remarkable for just a whale. What is it made out of, Sam?

>> It's made out of foam, fabric and this one is made with a spoon. This might be the rod -- well, see? And you can move its tail.

>> Okay, where do you put the hand -- is the hand up in the belly of the whale?

>> Yeah.

>> And it operates the mouth. That's terrific. That's terrific. Tell us about Big Bird, how did you make Big Bird?

>> I just made him out of the same thing except for yellow feathers.

>> So those are feathers?

>> And these are ping pong balls right there.

>> Okay. Now can you put that over your body? Or how is Big Bird, how do you

move Big Bird?

>> He wears orange pants with giant feet and the puppet is around his whole entire body, the right hand operates the mouth of the puppet. And that's why he does the voice of Big Bird.

>> Okay, okay.

>> And -- and to move his eyelids, there's a little pinkie that moves his eyelids up and down like this. The left wing moves the right-wing. And there's a fishing line that goes up to the neck of Big Bird and down to the right-wing and it acts as a counter balance. And he had to wear this harness to see where he's going, this camera harness that he wears all the time.

>> That's how he sees where he's going? Well, that's very complex.

>> Yep.

>> And you have figured that out. Did you have any kind of instructions or did you just figure out that whole process yourself?

>> I did -- on YouTube videos.

>> Great, great. Well, I see that miss piggy peeking over your shoulder.

>> Oh, hey, piggy.

[laughter].

>> But I understand that as long as doing this "Sesame Street" characters and some of the other puppets that you have also done some of your own puppets, right?

>> Yeah, like I made this this year. Her name is Chloe the goldfish.

>> And Chloe has a monocle so I assume that she's a smart goldfish?

>> A goldfish, actually.

>> How do you manipulate, you put your hand up in her head?

>> I do.

>> Okay, well -- and then again the tail. That's wonderful. Let's see another one of your own creations, Sam.

>> Here, I'm going to show you this one. His name is Alexander the alligator.

>> Okay.

>> But I just almost came up with his voice sort of. Here, okay. I think that almost -- sorry.

>> That's okay. That's okay. It's worth the wait.

>> Hold on. Excuse me. Okay, there we go. Hello. My name is Alexander the alligator.

>> [laughter] he's terrific. Could you turn him to the side so that we can see. So he's got a little shirt and tie on. Yes, he's a sophisticated alligator. And you've got the green hands, wonderful.

>> Yep. He's a live hand puppet.

>> And so that means that his hands are your hands or the puppeteer's hands?

>> Um-hmm.

>> That's terrific. Well, your puppets are great, Sam. And thank you so much for sharing those.

>> You're welcome. And oh, almost -- I did make Phil. You want to see?

>> Sure, we'll see Phil and then we'll move on. But we want to see Phil for sure.

>> Hello. [laughter] I also do Kermit.

>> So is fillet mouse?

>> He is a mouse. Made out of real fur.

>> Oh, nice. Nice. Well, I can hardly wait to see a puppet show with all of Sam Eiler's puppets and I'm looking forward to that.

>> Thank you.

>> You're welcome, Sam. And now moving on we're going to switch gears and move to Nancy Scott -- Nancy wood.

>> **Nancy Wood:** Hi, I'm Nancy wood, and thank you, Sam and Grant, for showing us your work. It's really inspiring and I'm glad that I'm here just to see it. I made a video for you which is on YouTube and I put the link in the chat in case anyone is interested and wants to see it separately. And I think that Randi is going to present it and Celia feel free to pause it if you want to ask me specific questions about anything. So I think that we're ready to go.

>> So, Randi, we're not seeing anything or maybe it's just my computer?

>> **Nancy Wood:** Would you like me to share it on my computer?

>> No, I'm wondering if my screen share stopped for some reason.

>> Is anyone else seeing it?

>> There we go.

>> **Nancy Wood:** Now there's something. When I pulled the PowerPoint down earlier it stopped the screen share.

>> So you can make it bigger by pulling that line over and minimizing the features.

>> Um-hmm.

>> If everyone would like to do that. So let me get back -- I will start it over, Nancy. There we go.

>> **Nancy Wood:** Hi, I'm Nancy wood and I'm a classically trained artist and I was trained drawing and painting. And I started using digital media when it came out in the mid 1990s and it's my favorite media now. Currently, I have been doing a series of works based on nature where I take photographs and scenic areas, and then I manipulate the photograph in photoshop and develop -- have it printed on --

>> We've lost the sound, Randi.

>> Yeah, it closed due to the pandemic.

>> **Nancy Wood:** And I have shown them in a number of regional and national shows over the last few years. And I like dealing with nature because of the beauty of nature and also the psychological benefits of being in nature. Scientific studies have shown that being in nature and natural areas can reduce stress and increase creativity, and better mood and mental performance. This is a photo that I took of a bridge over a stream behind the San Antonio zoo, it reminds me of one of Monet's paintings.

It's a beautiful scenic area on a lovely morning. This is the Colorado Bend State Park in the summer. This is a tree near my home that was going to be cut down. I took a picture of it. And I worked on it. And this last one is a scene of the San Antonio riverwalk in the summertime. I had used a photograph taken by a good friend of mine

who founded the mental illness awareness week exhibition in San Antonio. And I liked her photo so much that I made an artwork from it. All of these are available as limited edition prints at various sizes and on various substrates on my website, Nancywoodfineart.com, which I will put in the chat area. Many of my works are scenes that I took in state parks, of rivers, and trees, that grow along the rivers. And I made them various colors. Some are blues, some are greens, some are yellow. I like the beauty of the state park rivers. I also have a series of works based on flowers from the San Antonio area. And, again, when I create -- edit them in the computer, I'm thinking more as a painter. I'm not thinking as a photographer. I'm thinking as a painter and so that's why the result comes out looking very different from the photograph sometimes. These two images of flowers are part of a series that I did that I used in an animation that was presented at the San Antonio Luminaria contemporary arts festival in San Antonio. For example, I will start with a photo that I take in a state park like this. This tree became this blue tree. And this is all done digitally. And this is a photo that I took behind the San Antonio zoo. And I enhanced the colors, added a little texture and eliminated some of the unnecessary elements. This photo of the Guadalupe river state park I transformed into a blue tree over the river. A blue tree -- and this next photo is of a tree near my house that was going to be cut down, so I added more color to it and made it look a little more dynamic with texture so I would have an image of it long after it was gone. And it wasn't cut down, fortunately, they didn't. And this is one of my favorite works. It's one of the first works that I created.

And this is my studio and photoshop. I have been experimenting with some abstract backgrounds, adding fish to them. Revised image that I had of the Guadalupe river state park, and in this one I added the fish swimming around in the sky and these are just experiments. I'm not sure if I'm going to keep them or what I'm going to do with them, but I like to just kind of play around with different things. And currently I'm experimenting with some western-style art. This is one of Ty Defoe who is a Native American dancer who always performs at the Briscoe art museum every year and I made a portrait of one of my friends as a cowgirl. So I like to try to work in very different styles and things. So, that's a little introduction to my work. And I will turn this conference back over to Randi now. Thank you very much for allowing me to be here, Randi.

>> All right, thank you, Nancy. I love what you do with your photography and how it becomes so vibrant, but you can still see the original image through what you have done. Just beautiful work. And printing them on different textures and mediums also adds to -- adds to the excitement of the images. So we're going to end our little tour of the artists' mind and studio with John Bramblitt.

>> **John Bramblitt:** Oh, my goodness, guys, I'm so honored to be here and Grant, the same and Nancy -- oh, my goodness, so much talent.

It's brilliant. I started to become an artist and show because I wanted to meet other artists, other people as obsessed with art as I was, so it's brilliant to sit here and to hear about the stories and the type of art that you guys are doing. It's funny -- most of

the time whenever I give a talk in person, my guide dog is there. So the first person that anybody wants to me isn't me -- it is my guide dog, eagle. But she's currently snoring at my feet down here. And she's too heavy for me to lift. So hello from Eagle down there. But I was able to relate so much to everything that everybody was saying. You know, like Grant, I don't know, when I first started my art career I didn't see it as an art career at all. I lost my eyesight whenever I was in college and started painting. I had always done art my life and always drawing.

And any drawing medium that I could find. But then in college whenever I lost my eyesight it didn't even occur to me that I could still make art. And, you know, learning all of the different skills that you need to know to live life as a visually impaired person like the orientation of mobility and learning how to use a cane and later on my guide dog like Eagle, all of these skills taught me what I needed to know to get back into art. So I started learning how to draw again. But instead of using lines that you can see -- you can see the lines now, but it wouldn't be that great of a painting if you couldn't see it in the end. But instead of me being able to see it, I use lines that I could touch and feel. So I started working on that and mixing colors in a way, paints -- so that every color felt different to me.

And so finding different ways to do what I had been doing before. Which was brilliant. You know, art is such a healthy and amazing thing that can help you through any bad time and help you to celebrate good times. But I never thought that anybody would ever want to see a painting of mine. It wasn't even an idea. It was just something that I did that was very beneficial to me, but, you know, I wanted to meet other artists. So I started doing little shows. I wouldn't tell people that I was going, I would show and I wouldn't do an opening. You know, I would just hang the paintings and go away. And not tell anybody that I was visually impaired. And the shows did well and then it got out that I was visually impaired and so -- which was the best thing that could have happened, because I started to be contacted by different non-profits and charities saying, hey, you know, we heard that you're visually impaired and that you paint, can you come and talk to our clients, our people here. And this was back in, like, well, it started in 2001. So this was a long time ago. And there weren't really visually impaired painters around, it wasn't a common thing at all.

But whenever I would go and talk to these different groups -- and it could be children with autism or adults with Alzheimer's or people with PTSD, and traveling all over the country to give these talks, everybody that I met we just got each other. It's like we just understood. And it was just the most liberating feeling that I -- it was just this wonderful sort of feeling. And me doing these workshops, I started to get contacted by museums and they were saying, hey, you know, we want to be accessible to everybody, can you come and help us to do that. And I was like, heck, yeah, I can. So I started working with museums and started showing and we're teaching all kinds of workshops. And that's how that kind of happened. And then because I was working with museums, galleries were like, hey, we see that you're working with museums and can you come and show at our place. And like, heck yeah, I can. So I got into the art world by a very strange means, not by -- by accident. But I never thought that I

would show and I never thought that anyone would want to see one of my art pieces, my pieces of art. But I got into it because I was meeting people that I just enjoyed being around and I was doing something that I loved. Every time that I would paint, it made my day better. Since then I went from that and my artwork has been to over 120 countries. We have been all over the place with it. I have become the world's first blind muralist, sorry, I can't talk today -- doing four story murals and I did a 737, and we did crazy things. Anything that feels that I shouldn't do it, I usually try to do it, because, I don't know. But it's led to a lot of wonderful experiences and meeting a lot of people. Let me show you really quickly -- whenever I mention that I'm a visually impaired painter, sometimes people wonder how in the world can you do that? And so let me just show -- let me put this up and I'm using the microphone on my computer so I don't want to make it weird. So this is a painting that I did of a woman. And it's a lot of color. When I first started all of my paintings had to be very, very simple drawings. It's taken about 20 years to learn to draw again the way that I do now and to use color the way that I do now. But if you look at her hair, all of these are lines. So whenever I'm making a line I can touch and feel it. So whenever it crosses another line, I know exactly where I am. I don't know if it's coming across on the camera, but there's a lot of texture in the background and around. So every time that I make a stroke on a canvas it's a way to orient myself to where I am and where I have been. And as a pure sight artist I use your sight to where you are and if you're visually impaired you use your other senses to orient yourself. This is a silly one, I do a lot of work for cities and different things and this is actually for a train station and it's going to be put up over a park bench and prints of it. So it's a horse with a butterfly. But his head is at a funny sort of angle, and that way whoever is sitting in the park bench in front of him, like this is going to be made much bigger whenever they install it. And it will look like he's trying to take a bite out of the person's head or looking at person's head. I don't know, all art doesn't have to be that serious. There's a piece behind me that I just did a few days ago and for the Amy Carter museum, doing a talk with a wonderful jazz musician. When I hear music I see color so I tried to put that in the painting. So that's a painting that I did for that.

>> So, John, I could listen to you all day.

>> **John Bramblitt:** I ramble, I apologize.

>> We will have to wrap you up here and we'll have an opportunity to hear more from John, we've got a lot of questions. But thank you for sharing your art. You know that I'm one of your biggest fans. So, yes, so now we want to move on to some questions. And I'm going to open it up to the four of you. You can just jump in if you want to answer or raise your hand and I will go ahead and call on you. But the first question that we want to know is, do you feel that your disability has influenced your art in some way? And if you do think so, can you tell us more about that? And if you don't think that your disability has influenced your art, that's okay too. But John touched on that a little bit in his talk, but does anyone want to tell us a little bit about how they think that their disability has influenced their art form? So, Grant, go ahead.

>> **Grant Maniér:** Well, my autism has influenced the way that I am able to become

hyper-focused and my attention to detail is very precise. But my autism doesn't define me. I define my autism through my talents and skills.

>> Absolutely. Absolutely. Thank you, Grant. And does anyone else want to address that a little bit? Sam?

>> Sam Eiler: well, I do have a little autism too, but I sometimes feel really smart. And I just want to show you my new sign for my company. See?

>> Okay. Let me see if I can read that. Sam Eiler art incorporated. Very nice. With all of your drawings all around it.

>> Sam Eiler: I'm right here, right there.

>> You're in the middle, very good, very good.

>> Thanks.

>> You're welcome. So, John or Nancy, do you have anything about how you feel that your disability has influenced your art?

>> **Nancy Wood:** Yeah, there is a question in the chat about as a Deaf artist. I'm legally can have deaf and I have 17% hearing in one ear and before I got cochlear implants I was really -- and I think that it affected my art in a sense that I couldn't socialize, you know, I couldn't go to galleries and art openings and socialize with people. And socialization is important in any kind of work or activity that you do. And that was just before all of this Zoom stuff too. So, anyway, other than that, I'm a visual artist. So not being able to hear doesn't really affect my visual art much at all.

>> But you say that it did affect you going out and trying to even promote your art because of the difficulty in the public situation?

>> **Nancy Wood:** Oh, definitely, definitely. Yeah, you know, I go to places and someone would ask me a question and I'd go, what did you say, what did you say, you know? And I got very reclusive for about 15 years and I was very reclusive. I was teaching online. And I didn't really go out too much or do too much.

And then this online stuff started expanding and that's one of the advantages of online work now is for people with disabilities. We can really do a lot of stuff online now.

>> Absolutely. Absolutely.

>> **John Bramblitt:** I noticed -- I drew before I lost my eyesight and when I was sighted, if I did a drawing I wanted it to look very realistic. If it looked like whatever I was drawing, it was a good drawing. But after I lost my eyesight I still wanted people to understand what it looked like but it became more important that it felt like whatever or whoever I was drawing. Like the color became more important and the feeling and the emotions behind it. And we call it visual art, so it seems that visual would really be important in it.

And it underscored more of what art truly was and what art meant.

And it's more ideas and emotions and feelings and all. So that changed for me whenever I lost my eyesight.

>> Terrific. Thanks, John. I appreciate that, thank you all. So the next one is you're all working artists, and I'm wondering if you have someone who supports you in your artistic career? And, if so, can you share out who that is and what they do and if it's a family member or a mentor or a parent or a wife, or -- or an organization. Is there

anyone that helps you -- supports you in your work? I know that no one is doing your artwork, that's you, you are the artist. But is there anyone who sort of helps you to do some of the other things that you need to do as an artist? I think that Sam had his hand up? Sam?

>> Sam Eiler: I'm really grateful for my boss at SAGE studio, miss Lucy Groves.

>> And Lucy is with us.

>> Thank you, Sam. Yeah, I feel very lucky to get to work with Sam and a handful of other Texas-based artists, so SAGE studio is a gallery and a studio space in Austin, Texas, that works with and exhibits the work of artists with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I have known Sam since I was in high school. A friend of mine knew that I had this small gallery and I think that they sent me pictures of Sam -- it might have even been in that Big Bird costume and I was so blown away by the ingenuity of using, you know, household items to really to create these incredible characters. And it's even -- Sam is a really relatively young artist, you know, Sam is just now 20, is that right? Sam?

>> That's right.

>> Yeah. And so at 20, I feel like you are so accomplished already and it's been so amazing to get to watch his process evolve. And I feel super lucky to get to work with you, Sam. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Thank you, Lucy. And in the slide, the SAGE studio slide is up on the screen for those of you that would like to get in contact with them. And I believe that we're dropping their contact information in the chat. So, Grant, you had your hand raised?

>> **Grant Maniér:** Yes, I have a very supportive network around me, but this was all made possible by one very persistent person -- that is -- and that person is my Mom. Julie Coye. She is my mom but also my manager. So you know what that makes her? My Mom-ager. She handles scheduling and the traveling and the negotiating. And she picks up my materials and driving and things like that. But that's not all -- we also -- we also -- we also wrote books together. And these are children's books, "Grant the Jigsaw Giraffe and friends." Can you see them?

>> Yes, we can.

>> **Grant Maniér:** They're all based on different topics and there's still more to come.

>> So how does your Mom help you with those books, Grant? Your Mom-ager.
Excuse me.

>> **Grant Maniér:** She is the author of the books and I'm the illustrator. Let me show you. This book is about me. This is all -- this is all of my artwork. And, of course, these are my illustrations. I did the characters.

>> And you all do them with your eco-art?

>> Eco-art.

>> Well, that's terrific. Thank you, Grant, and thank you, Julie, for being such a great mom-ager.

>> I'm always here. [laughter].

>> How about John or Nancy?

>> **John Bramblitt:** Oh, goodness, yeah, my wife is my partner in crime. Jackie, she's incredible. And, you know, it's funny, because with art, I think that with most creatives -- at least for me, maybe I shouldn't throw anyone else under the bus -- but it's hard for me with numbers and with dates and schedules and all of that sort of stuff. She's brilliant.

She was a director at a major university for years and then left and came over to the dark side of art. And runs this business and it's incredible. Like when she kind of took over the business, the amount of work with charities and non-profits tripled in the first year. It was just amazing. Because it helps to actually have someone who knows what they're doing when it comes to this business and stuff. So, you know, and having somebody in your corner that is so supportive, it just means the world. So, yeah, it's -- I am very -- I'm fortunate.

>> Yeah, and I know that when you're up on those scaffoldings working on the murals against the wall, she's standing at the bottom, right? Making sure that you don't fall.

>> **John Bramblitt:** We have radios so I'm at the top and I'm going down, so I need to make sure that she's always happy because if we're doing a large mural and she is -- like this guy, she could get rid of me pretty easy. [laughter].

>> All right. Nancy, do you have anything that you wanted to add?

>> **Nancy Wood:** Yeah, I wanted to put in a plug for art sparks Texas, because when I started promoting my work it was through a friend of mine who also had a hearing loss and she introduced me to V.S.A. and when I started exhibiting with them, that's when I really gained confidence and I started working to exhibit my art. That was right before I got my cochlear implants. But I was very comfortable exhibiting with them. And I have to say that still a large percentage of my experts and sales have been through Art Spark, and the organizations that are connected to Art Spark. So, yeah.

>> Thank you. I'll send you your payment a little bit later, Nancy. Thank you for that plug. No -- yeah, this is Art Spark for those that don't know, we're located in Austin but we're a state-wide organization and we work with all art forms. So visual arts or just artists that are just one of the artists that we work with. And we work with dancers and musicians and actors, but we have a number of visual artists on our roster, April Sullivan is our art works director. And I just wanted to put a plug in -- every year we do artist of the year awards. And so we -- our nomination process is open to the end of this week. And we give awards to an artist with a large body of work, we give the Spark award out. We have the mobile art award for an artist over the age of 65, so we have several different categories. And we encourage you to go to artsparktx.org and download a nomination. And also our website is up on the screen.

And we'll drop it into the chat.

So, please, feel free to contact us if you need help pursuing some form of art, either as a career or as a hobby. So our next question is -- what other factors -- school or church or a teacher or a mentor or any kind of experiences that have helped you to achieve your successes? And were there any programs that were helpful to you, like the Dars or Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehab, or V.I. services or anything like that, is there anything that you were able to access into to give you either

financial or -- or educational support? John?

>> **John Bramblitt:** Sure, sure. Whenever I lost my eyesight I was in college and I was already enrolled in the office of disability accommodation at the college, because I have epilepsy and they were instrumental. And Ron Venable was the director of at that at the time. And I thought that I had to leave school and everything was over and they are like, heck no, there's so much that you can do. You can do anything that you want. And I didn't know anything. I thought that they were so nice to lie to me just to make me feel better that everything was not a loss. But everything they told me was absolutely true.

And they made sure -- I started getting the training that I needed for Braille and the screen readers and the orientation for mobility, and everything, one after another. And one thing that I have noticed with anybody who has a disability really is that -- or anybody that goes for any type of struggle, no matter what it is -- having a good core of people around you that believe in you, even when you don't believe in your yourself -- it's so vital and so important. And I was fortunate to have that.

>> That's great. And that's really good information to share, because people sometimes do think that when they acquire a disability that their life is going to change so drastically and it's good to know that there are organizations and people out there that can really help -- help you to reestablish yourself. And to regain a lot of what you thought that you would have lost. So that's -- that's terrific.

And I'm glad that they were there for you, John.

>> **John Bramblitt:** Thank you.

>> That is great. Grant? You've got -- you are muted, Grant.

>> **Grant Maniér:** There we go. Well, there are a number of people and organizations that have helped me to succeed, but a very important factor that I believe that is key is entering contests. Winning contests helped my art to become recognized and in demand to know more about my work, and about myself. And now my work hangs in the Texas capital, and the United States capitol, and at the United Nations.

>> That's terrific.

>> Of course, the V.S.A. in Austin has been very supportive of my growth too.

>> We appreciate that. We remember -- I have a picture of your butterfly in my office, you know, from a while ago. I look at it every day.

>> **Grant Maniér:** Thank you.

>> So, Grant, the contest -- did you enter a contest that got you into the U.N. or was that -- how did that work?

>> **Grant Maniér:** Well, definitely -- well, yeah, getting into the capitol is with strokes of genius with Temple Grandin, and the first was the Austin rodeo and winning that grand championship in 2011 helped to launch everything. And here's the thing -- I won again the next year in 2012.

>> They couldn't get enough of you, Grant. [laughter] that's terrific. Anyone else have a teacher or a mentor or have any advice about entering competitions or things that helped them? Okay. So how -- how do you sell your art? You're all artists and you are all, you know, and some of you have made books and you're making puppets

and so how are some of the ways that you sell your art, where can people go to find your art if they wanted to buy it? So, Grant?

>> **Grant Maniér:** Well, currently due to the pandemic we are selling online on my website, jigsawgrant.com. We had a few art shows but no conferences but you can still find my originals and prints and books and more about me and my eco-art, all on my website.

>> I'm sure that we'll put that website into the chat box.

>> **Grant Maniér:** Go ahead and do that.

>> Terrific. And, so, Sam, how do you -- how do you -- how do people get to see your art? Where is it available?

>> Sam Eiler: oh, yes, so I think that -- I think that all of the art that I just do is available on SAGE studio. The company that Lucy owns. Right, Lucy?

>> So that's right. So we had the good fortune of participating in the virtual studio tour most recently, although what is time? It's now been a couple months but we got to do a virtual exhibition of Sam's puppets. What was really amazing about it is that Sam is not only a visual artist but has such an interactive element to his work and we created videos of the puppets that were sale and those all stip live on our website. You can look at them and there are some original puppets for sale on our website, sagestudioatx.com. And Sam has been toying with the idea of doing custom puppets. So doing puppets in the likeness of someone that you -- you know, you feel deserves a very special gift. He's done some prototypes of puppets in the past and those are really amazing. Yeah.

>> That's great. Thank you, Sam.

>> You're welcome.

>> So where -- John, where might people be able to find your art?

>> **John Bramblitt:** You know what, online right now with Covid, oh, my goodness, that's the way, isn't it. So by my website Bramblitt.com. And media is a wonderful thing because it levels the playing field quite a bit. I think that a lot of times when people think about social media, you think that you have to have a ton of followers and all of this and you don't really. You jut go out there and you just show what it is that you're working on. I think that people would be really interested in that and they start following. You know, you don't need 100,000 followers, you just need a few that are really interested and they'll go from there and they'll go to your website. But we work with galleries and we work with festivals, you know, anything -- a lot of non-profits and charities, actually, is a great way. We'll go in and I'll do live painting and we'll donate the painting and raise money for a really great cause. Then a lot of times -- maybe we'll have a little show there and it's for something at the gala to do or they'll go online, so all of that is good. We're about to open our own gallery here in Denton, and the focus is for artists with disabilities. So that's in the works. We're going to do it last year but Covid is just crazy. [laughter] so this year hopefully is going to be the year and we're just looking for the spot.

>> Great, well, we look forward to that and all of you artists out there, pay attention to when John opens up his gallery. He'll be looking for art from you.

>> **John Bramblitt:** I sure will, oh, my goodness.

>> I want to say that, you know, online -- in person is always wonderful because you get to chat with the artists and so many times people say that they buy art because of the artists and not necessarily because of the art. And so an opportunity to meet an artist and to get to know their story is so important when you are selling your art. So even if you are selling it online, telling a little bit of your story and a little bit about how you created your art it really does help people because they feel like they are supporting an individual or that they're purchasing a part of an individual that they can -- that they can share in their homes. And we have learned that over the years at Art Spark and the work that we have done. So, Nancy, I know that you have mentioned it a little bit that you have done most of your selling through gallery shows and through our -- the Art Spark network. Do you have anything that you want to add to that in terms --

>> **Nancy Wood:** No, most of the work that I sell has been seen in person at a live exhibit and then they go to my website. But, yeah, anyway -- and I do enter a lot of competitions too. I do have one arts consultant company that sells my work, you know, that prints out individual pieces for different companies.

>> That's nice. That's another way that people can go. So, John has alluded to this -- the pandemic and Covid and how it's sort of flipped everything upside down. So have you found yourself doing anything differently as a result of this past year? And John is nodding yes. Is there something that you want to share, John?

>> **John Bramblitt:** You know, the pandemic has been such a challenge for everyone. And I was so fortunate in that I -- we do a lot of workshops and a lot of talks and things, which is surprising if you hear me talk now and I stutter all the time -- [laughter] -- but I do, and I get on zoom and I don't mind making fun of myself every once in a while.

But during the pandemic or during the Covid time, all of that really increased. I used to do a lot of traveling and going to give talks.

Instead we started doing that a whole lot more because on zoom it's so easy to be able to do that. So I was -- I have been dropping into schools and libraries and museums and stuff all over the place, because it's just -- you know, it's so easy to do that. And so that's really changed. And it's really moved our focus online. You know, even more. So I was glad that we already had that started. You know, and I want to encourage if anybody needs help with that or they're wondering about different things -- don't hesitate to reach out to me. I do Facebook streams every week where we chat about anything and if you want to get on our Facebook stream on Tuesday and just ask, well, hey, how do you do this or do that? Feel free. And send me an email, whatever. We're all artists with disabilities and we need to stick together and to get through this thing.

>> Thank you, John. I want to say that there's a lot of information that people are dropping into the chat box and I -- I can't possibly keep up with it. So I hope that people are seeing what resources are being dropped into the chat, the chat box. And we might be able to try to capture that to send out with -- with the webinar -- if we

make it available. I'll have to talk to Randi about that, but I do call attention for people to capture the resources that people are dropping into the chat box. Nancy, one came through and they wanted to know what is the consulting firm that you were working with, Nancy?

>> **Nancy Wood:** It's art lifting and they specialize in artists with disabilities.

>> So it's art lifting. Is that a dot com?

>> **Nancy Wood:** Yes.

>> Okay, all right. So, Sam, or Grant, or Nancy, has the Covid and the fact that you have been locked in your room for a very long time -- has that changed the way that you're doing work, Grant?

>> **Grant Maniér:** Well, since the pandemic that shut most of us down, we have no shows, no conferences, no work. But, yes, I did stay busy. I have created an art collection with my recycled jewelry, which I also kale my Covid art collection. I have also co-wrote and illustrated the children's books with my Mom. In fact, I wanted show you guys I have a jigsaw giraffe mascot.

>> And it's taller than you are.

>> **Grant Maniér:** And now I do zooms and I now have people all over the world like Temple Grandin.

>> I heard John say that it's both a blessing and a curse. I find myself working harder because now I don't have to drive to different meetings, I can just sit and hop from Zoom to Zoom and before I know it eight hours have gone by and I'm sure that you're all feeling the same way. So, Sam, has -- have you found your inspiration or the work that you have done with your puppets has it changed at all with being -- with Covid over the last year?

>> Sam Eiler: almost. But I'm about to make two plays. I'm making one about field the mouse -- or whatever this is -- but after that I just wanted to make -- I just want to make another play called "the muppets take the long center" based on the muppets take the Hollywood ball and the London 02.

>> Okay. Who are you working with to write these plays?

>> Sam Eiler: Lucy. I think that I'll work with Lucy here.

>> That's new to me.

>> You are live now, Lucy.

>> Wow, yeah -- [laughter] it really put me on the spot. One thing that I was going to ask you, Sam, so right when the pandemic started you had come into SAGE studio to work in the studio space, right?

>> Uh-huh.

>> But we couldn't do that anymore. So we started the commission project and do you remember in the pandemic that you were taking commissions and you were doing what? Do you remember what you were making? People would send you a picture and you would make?

>> Sam: portraits?

>> Yeah, out of -- do you remember what kind of portraits, were they drawn or sculpey?

>> A bit of both.

>> You have done both, yeah, you're right. So Sam has done two different commission projects during this time. Where for the holiday season -- folks could send in -- we knew that, you know, not everyone was able to be with their families and so Sam would create custom postcards that you could -- we would mail out. So you could send your Home who you were unable to see a hand drawn portrait of you guys together and Sam did an amazing job with that commission project. And then right when the pandemic started, Sam was doing sculpey portraits so these really cool sort of artistic caricatures of people and we're mailing those out just because we wanted to keep working with Sam so we would meet over Zoom and exchanged a lot of emails. So I think that, like, John and Grant, they have already said that it's hard not being together but I'm so impressed with ways that you guys have found to stay busy and connected and, Sam, you're no exception. You have done a great job in a weird year.

>> Yes. And, Sam, you had your hand raised, did you want to share something with us? Okay.

>> Sam Eiler: by the way, I wanted to show Lucy this because I showed it to her this morning and -- look --

>> Art your way. By Sam Eiler.

>> Sam: I'll do my art at SAGE studio my way -- right, my way.

>> We heard it first here. [laughter] all right, and so we have talked a little bit about how the -- how this pandemic might have made us change the direction of how we're doing our art. A lot more working through zoom and a lot more not doing in person. So, Nancy, has this Covid changed the way that you have been doing some of your art?

>> **Nancy Wood:** Well, it certainly limited the places that I have to exhibit in. And I canceled one major exhibit right after the opening and I had another one scheduled that was canceled.

So it's kind of a downer that way. But in terms of making art, I'm still making it. I'm really thinking more of trying to do things that can be customized, rather than make something physical and then hang it and try to sell it. But, I don't know, I'm looking forward to things opening up and doing more exhibits again.

>> Yeah, that is one of the heartbreaks of what happened. Nancy had a show here in Austin that we had just opened and it was the Dory art center and it got closed, and it was just a heartbreak. And of course nothing being open. But so many of the galleries have really worked to try to do interactive exhibits for people, really, really worked.

And I'll be interested to see now that they're opening up a wee bit and people are able to go out with the vaccine, how that's going to change -- are we going to remain hybrid or what is going to really happen? Because as John mentioned, one thing that we at our Spark have learned is that going virtual has really created a more inclusive and accessible platform for so many of our artists, because transportation is such an issue and access to different kinds of services. So it really has -- even though people with disabilities have been telling us for years that this is the way that we ought to be doing

it, it took a pandemic for people to finally listen and say, yeah, this is actually a good way to do business and to include more people in the work that we do. So, looking forward to seeing what that's going to be like moving forward. So before -- I want to be mindful of the time. Okay, great. So if you -- if there was one thing that you could have known before you got started, what would that have been? What is the one thing that you would have liked to have known before you got started on this journey? And, if so, would that be something that would be good advice that you could give to someone else who was just starting out? Is there anybody that has one thing that they wish they had known? I know that you have about 21 things that you wish you had known.

>> What is the advice that I have for others that I wish I had known now? If I know now that I wish I had known then? I wish I had known before the difference between acid free paper and non-acid free paper. [laughter].

I learned the hard way and I learned about the word "restoration."

>> So can you tell us briefly what the difference is between -- what does it do to your art, the acid-free versus not acid free?

>> Well, using magazines like "national geographics" in the 1980s, the 1960s -- when I started out working with paper from that, it looked great at first, but over time it starts to -- it starts to fade.

>> Ah, okay. Okay. So, John, you were eager to say something.

>> **John Bramblitt:** I think that one of the things -- I see this from a lot of creatives -- but a lot of times when people are about to start out and they're not sure, they're always so down on themselves and their art and they're not willing to give it a start or something. Or they think that I'm not good enough or I can't do this. I would just say do it -- give it a try and keep creating, keep creating. Go out there, because, you know, you're comparing yourself to other artists and other people's work. You know, and I will never be a Sam or a Grant or a Nancy, you know, I will never be able to make their art as good as they make it. I can only do my stuff as well as I can try to do it. So I wish that when I first started they wasn't so hard on myself.

And to just to create. To let yourself go and to just give it a try.

>> That's great advice. We tend to -- we try to always edit ourselves and think, Oh, this can be better and then we don't put it out there to get -- to receive the feedback and the positive rewards that are waiting for us. Sam or Nancy, do you have anything that you wish you had known or any advice that you have? Sam, go ahead.

>> Sam Eiler: I thought that I'd tell Lucy the truth. Lucy --

>> Hey, Sam, did you hear -- did you hear the question, would you give yourself any advice? Because you and I could talk about something if there's -- if there's something between you and I we can talk about that after. But -- if you were just starting to make art -- and a piece of advice or you could go back and talk to yourself when you were younger, when you were just starting to be an artist, what would you tell yourself?

>> Sam Eiler: I would tell myself just to do some art your way. As you might know, I know that I'm a puppet maker and a puppeteer. But I'm also a cartoonist.

>> That's right. So yours is sort of along the same lines as John is to trust yourself as an artist and to do the things that you know that you want to do and how to do it. And don't let any doubts or fears get in your way.

>> That's what I wanted to do at SAGE studio someday. I want to try something new this time. Like I'm going to do some art my way.

>> All right, well, I can't wait to see what that is. And, Nancy, do you have anything?

>> **Nancy Wood:** I have to agree with what John said. I think that just put your work out there as much as possible and get as much feedback as possible. Because that's how I learned really that I was going in the right direction when I started getting into juried exhibitions and getting positive feedback, so even if you get negative feedback once you don't need to worry about it. But feedback is very important, yeah.

>> Terrific, thanks, Nancy. So we're going to switch gears just a little bit here and I want you to think about the fact, you know, that this is a forum on careers in the arts for people with disabilities and all of you have self-identified as having a disability and so if you could change the world with a message about people with disabilities, what would that message be? Grant?

>> **Grant Maniér:** My message is that it's not what we can't do that people should focus on. It's what we can do that should develop even more.

>> Very well said, Grant. Thank you very much.

>> **Grant Maniér:** Thank you.

>> John, you want to go next?

>> **John Bramblitt:** Oh, sure, I mean, gosh, I think that Grant said it perfectly though. [laughter] oh, my goodness, that's so brilliant. But I think that is the thing that, you know, people focus on the disability. So they focus on a limitation. And sometimes they'll take that across the board, that because you have a disability or a limitation in one thing that that might apply -- you know, to a lot of different things. Just because someone maybe can't hear as well or see as well or to do something as well, it doesn't mean that you are limited in any other way. And once you accommodate for that and you adapt to it, that is not even that much of a limitation. To be honest, you know, if you're fortunate to live long enough, we're all going to have a disability of some sort. We're all going to be limited in something that we're doing. So, you know, to limit people because of a disability -- it just doesn't even make sense really. And so, you know, I think that having a full understanding of what it means, you know, is really -- is kind of helpful. But I like what Grant said. I'm going with Grant on this one.

>> You're going to go with Grant, all right. All right, Sam, do you have a message that you would like to change the world with?

>> **Sam Eiler:** of course. At SAGE studios, I just want to do some comics. Like I'm going to make my new characters. Like the science animals. And their names are Rachel the mouse, Chuck the shark, and Steve the today and penguin jimmy and Lucy rattlesnake and Mr. and Mrs. Beatle.

>> All right, so, Sam, we will look forward to seeing those new characters and as you send your message to the world, right, that just because I might have whatever, you know, that I am an artist and my work can change the world. Right?

>> Right.

>> Nancy, do you have a message that you would like to share with the world?

>> **Nancy Wood:** Yeah, I think we're all on the same track. I saw a t-shirt once that said "my ears don't work but my brain is fine."

And I thought about buying it because I had been in situations where, you know, people start treating me like I was retarded or something because I kept asking them to repeat things and I didn't seem to understand stuff. So you have to understand that people with disabilities, there's something in us that doesn't work but everything else about is just normal -- we're normal people just like everybody else. So, yeah.

>> We're all just typical, and we all have our strengths and our not so strengths. And that's what makes the world such a unique and diverse place to live. So, I'm going to turn it over to Randi and she'll talk about the Governor's committee and the national disability employment awareness month's poster. That's a mouthful.

>> It is a mouthful, it is. Our office sponsors a competition every year. It typically begins about May. And so notification will go out in the next couple of weeks about the poster competition. It is intended to spark conversations about employing people with disabilities, but it doesn't have to be about employment.

And I will show you a couple because three of the artists with us today are past winners. John Bramblitt's piece is showing now from 2013. It's a vibrant sky with reds and blues and the Hill Country.

And you can see the hills and there's a cowboy sitting on his horse and looking off into the sunset.

And he was our 2013 winner. So this gives you an example of what we do with the posters. We actually send them out to about 2,500 individuals and businesses across the state -- libraries, workplaces, Texas workforce commission helps to disseminate them as well and we get them in offices in order to spark that conversation about hiring people with disabilities. This next one is Grant's piece. It is the moon, a sliver of the moon, with a face. But the sun is like coming out of the face. It has red around the sun. Behind the moon, the crescent moon, is a blue sky with stars. On the other side of the red that encases the sun, is some light blue paper as well as a border. But the border -- you can't see this here -- we have the original piece in our space, is actually mirrors. So he -- this is back when he started using -- I believe -- some of those jewels to create his work. And the last one up here is Nancy's piece from just 2017. And it is a woman sitting on the clouds looking into a sunset as well. The clouds are pink and blue. The woman is reaching towards the sunset. She is sitting on the ground and reaching forward and the sky is a beautiful sunset with oranges and blues and darker oranges. And that is the piece that won that year. So we -- we share this so that hopefully that you will consider -- I hope that we have a lot of artists out there, submitting your work for the competition. I'm going to back up a little bit to just show you the link to the website, keep an eye out for that. And if you are connected to our gov delivery dissemination, we do send out mass emails and the notification for the next competition should come out pretty soon. We try to have the poster work in by May or June, create the poster by July and get them printed by

August, early September, so they can go out before disability employment awareness month. That's it. And I don't know if you wanted to go into some questions next, Celia, we have a few.

>> Yeah, yeah, I think that we should. I hope that you have been taking notes because I have not taken note of any of the questions.

>> Well, I have a few here. We have quite a number. I did share some things that people shared with us into the chat -- the chat feature. A question for Grant about his art. Have you thought about writing a book to show children how to become an eco-artist? This would be a wonderful idea to get students started on creating art from recycled materials. What do you think, Grant?

>> **Grant Maniér:** Hold on one second.

>> Well, I guess that would be me since I do the writing.

>> My mother again.

>> We wrote our children's book -- this is "grant, the jigsaw giraffe: different is more" about a giraffe who could not hold a paint brush because of his hooves and so he was challenged there and born different. But through the inspiration of his friends and family, Grant found the way to become the artist that he wants to be. And this summer I'm actually working on Grant Maniér's 10-year biography.

>> Very exciting.

>> we look forward to seeing that when it comes out, Julie. Thank you so much.

>> We'll keep you posted.

>> Thank you, Julie. John, we have a question for you. I want to give you two in one here. Did you practice the drawing and painting or did you have any instructor? Actually, did you take courses? I talk with individuals who are blind that want to learn art techniques. Part two of that also -- is your work considered textile art?

>> **John Bramblitt:** When I was sighted I had a lot of instruction. I am a nerd so I read all of the books they could and every lesson. So I learned every type of drawing that I could. After I lost my eyesight, I am old, guys -- this was a long time ago -- this was like in 2001 and there weren't really people out there, you know, the idea of visual arts for a non-visual person wasn't really a concept. So there wasn't really anybody to teach me. But I was fortunate in that I was going to a college with a lot of arts and I had taken so much composition and drawing. So I was able to take what I had learned before and the new things that I was learning from learning how to understand the world using your sense of touch, by using a cane and all of this and how to orient yourself. So just combining the two. So I had a lot of instruction before but after losing my eyesight I didn't have a lot then. But that's changing. We do workshops and I have taught hundreds of visually impaired children to paint and children, and that's becoming a part ever the curriculum in a lot of places. And some of my art is tactile and some isn't. I -- in the beginning all of my lines had to be giant thick lines that I could touch and feel easily. But the more that you do it, the better you get. And the better my sense of touch got, and I was able to paint with lines that weren't necessarily raised so I could feel the difference. And the benefit of that is that it opened up a whole world of different art techniques like washes and glazes. If you

had a giant thick line like a dam, so you do a wash across the canvas and it would all stay on one side of the line. So there's some of my paintings which are very tactile and some aren't. Generally if I'm making artwork that I know that people will be able to touch or someone with a visual impairment is going to be anywhere near it, I try to make it where it's very tactile. So sorry for the long answer. I get excited about art and I just ramble.

>> That's okay, that's okay. A question for Sam, do you -- are you doing art full-time right now?

>> Sam Eiler: I am.

>> All right. And we have -- where to purchase your pieces if anyone is interested, right, Lucy?

>> Correct. So as I know that Sam has many aspirations as a cartoonist, as a puppeteer and also he has expressed that he's interested in teaching art at some point. But he is currently still a student. So Sam mostly you work on your art in the evenings and the weekends, correct?

>> He gives a thumbs up.

>> Very good, very good. A question for everybody -- how do you -- or maybe not everybody -- I think that it depends if you have done this. How do you work with government agencies that want to commission artistic works such as working to meet what they want as far as a design or a theme? Does it take time to develop something before starting the work? So I know that, John, you have done some commission pieces. So maybe you can answer that? I'm not sure, Grant, if you have done any large commission pieces?

>> **John Bramblitt:** I do a lot of commission pieces and I'm working for one for Florida, a giant turtle that is taking up a big part of my studio right now. But it's a giant turtle that I am painting. You know, anytime that I do a commission, whether for the government or anywhere, I -- I like to talk to them and to see what they're interested in and what they want. It's kind of wonderful in a way because, you know, as an artist you can create whatever you want, but then whenever you are working with someone, you know, then you are able to take what they're wanting to say, what they're wanting to -- other people to see and to understand from it -- and to be able to take that in and to make it your own and put your own spin on it. So it's a nice conversation. And so I always enjoy it. But it's a little -- usually when I do something like that, I will come up with three or four paintings, ideas, sketches, and then I'll completely do a painting on canvas so they can see it before we ever do a large-scale thing or something.

>> And, Grant, you wanted to comment on that as well?

>> **Grant Maniér:** Yes, because I have done my fair share of commission work. For example, I have had Campbell concrete commission me making a concrete truck for them in my eco-art.

And I did my research and I took pictures all over the truck and I get every little detail. And so just like what John said, working on a commission piece takes time. But it can be done.

>> And another question for everyone -- well, I don't know -- Nancy, did you want to

respond to that? Okay. I don't think that Sam has commissioned anything gigantic with the government or anything yet. Question is for all of the panelists -- how many of you had a mentor that helped to develop your artistic skills? If not, what is the challenge with your disability to develop those skills? Was it the school or what was it? Did anyone have a mentor, could, Grant?

>> **Grant Maniér:** Well, I have had many mentors and teachers help me along the way. This is something that I tell everybody -- to have a strong support group, they will help you to cross the finish line.

>> Very good.

>> **Grant Maniér:** In fact, one of my mentors is on this book. This is Dr. Temple Grandin, and she's in my newest book and there's my illustration of her right there.

>> Very good. Very good. Thank you for sharing that.

>> **Grant Maniér:** Thank you.

>> Anyone else with a mentor to help them to develop their skills or what kind of challenges did you face in school when you were younger?

>> Well, I can say that I didn't have a mentor really, because when I started I thought that I was crazy and I just figured that everybody else would think that I was crazy too. So I didn't have a mentor for the art. But one of the challenges that I had was just the idea of disability. I think with galleries and with artists, there's this idea that you have to show in galleries and if you're not showing in galleries, then you're not successful at all. And the bad thing about a gallery is that a gallery wants to show artists that have been shown in galleries. So if you have never shown in a gallery it's hard to show in a gallery because they only want gallery artists and so it's hard to break in. And then being someone with a disability, sometimes, you know, they may not want to take a risk on someone they're not sure. If it's a visually impaired visual artist, maybe they don't want to risk their space in their gallery for that. But I was able to find a way around that by working with non-profits and charities, you know, showing them and helping them with different things and working with museums because they wanted to be inclusive. So there's challenges, but, fortunately, you know, just like any problem in life, there's ways around that.

>> All right. Another question for everyone -- for those of you who are -- for those who are aspiring artists -- not you -- but other people who are aspiring artists, how important is to have networking connections in order to get to procure artwork for the government? This is another one related to the government. Entering into contests or doing work for non-profits were mentioned as one way. What else -- what other kind of networks did you need to develop?

>> Yeah, I think that is good for people to think about networks in terms of, you know, we have talked about mentors and we have talked about teachers and we have talked about support people, wives, mom-agers, SAGE studio, and the people that are there. Is there any network of individuals that you found helpful in your journey as an artist, let's say. You know, can we think of that? Did you learn about different contests to participate in by joining, let's say, an artist co-op --

>> A Facebook group of artists? I have seen art calls for Austin. Did any of those

kind of avenues -- are you part of those?

>> I'm seeing none. I know that we at Art Spark, we have a newsletter that goes out pretty much monthly with calls for art. And different opportunities for artists and so, you know, if you join our art list, we've got over 500 artists on our mailing list. And so that's a network of sorts. You receive emails, because April, all of us get all of these notifications from all over the country in terms of calls for art. So that would be one. A Facebook group you could join. I know that tomorrow night we're doing a makers meet-up where if you're an artist that you can just come on to -- we have a zoom call -- or go to meeting -- and you just come and make art together. So it's not a class and it's not any kind of stress that you have to be good, it's just making art and I think that tomorrow they're going to speed paint. So --

>> So you might contact Art Spark. We gave you the information earlier. And find out about that if you're interested in connecting with that because that could develop relationships that could then lead to other opportunities.

>> Exactly. Exactly.

>> Well, we have run out of time. It has been a delightful session. And I'm so appreciative for all of you to be here today, Nancy, and Sam, John, and Grant, Lucy and Celia. Stay tuned for future webinars that we will host. You will get a follow-up email. We will send the link again for this recording. And I will go ahead and do as Celia suggested and I would gather the information in the chat or the Q&A and the resources that you might find interesting. Other than that, I say good day, and have a great evening.

>> Thank you, everyone. It was a delightful way to spend the afternoon.

>> Good to be on here.

>> Round of applause, round of applause.

>> Thank you, guys.

>> Good night, everyone.

>> Good night, everyone.

>> Good night, bye-bye.