



The Vanguard Youth Arts Collective Presents:

SPOT ON!

Issue 8, February 2022

Interview with Anthony Di Fazio

Edited by Meaghan Sweeney

The Vanguard Youth Arts Collective are a group of creatively driven youth who act as a voice for an emerging generation of the arts within the Windsor Essex region.

'Spot On!' is Vanguard's new artist interview series edited by members Meaghan Sweeney and Alexei Ungurenaşu. These interviews offer a spotlight for emerging and established local artists who work in various media to discuss and promote their past and current art projects.

Anthony Di Fazio (he/him) is a clothing designer and process artist based in Windsor, Ontario. He has always been interested in recycling and reusing objects. When he walks, he often scavenges for materials and objects to repurpose into his art. His clothing prints are largely inspired by this process of scavenging. He takes materials such as weeds, broken records, beach plastics, plastic bags, and warning labels, and he applies these objects to different printing processes. In this way, his prints echo the environment they came from. His art-making process is centered around collecting and repurposing waste. He delves into many different avenues for his art such as series of paintings, performance art, sculptures, prints, and sounds. He has a background in fine arts from Fanshawe College, graduating in 2018. During his education, he received three awards: the Zubickz Group Sculpting Project Award, Bob and Shelly Siskind Visual Arts Award, and Satellite Project Space Award. He hopes his clothing can inspire the wearers and observers to embody the resourceful lifestyle of using what they have available around them. In his own words, "Create with waste. Leftover scraps for new generations."



Anthony with a "Washed Up World" skateboard

How did you get started in the arts?

I blame the Tony Hawk video games for a lot of the influences in my art. When I was about 7, I started copying the graphics on the bottom of fingerboards and skateboards that I found in skateboard magazines. Bucky Lasek, Birdhouse, Blind, and World Industries were just a few of my favourite companies that I loved to copy. When I was 11, I started getting really into graffiti. I would research graffiti legends and local graffiti artists to develop my styles. Tagging up the city allowed me to express my desire to create, and it allowed me to show it publicly. I believe that this high adrenaline, desire to create, and public display which doing graffiti provided me ultimately led me into doing performance-based work.



"Fear and loathing" (2021): Ink on maple

When I was 14, I started playing drums. With a few years of writing songs and several shows under my belt, I started getting involved in the local noise scene. This is when I realized music is just organized sounds; that's when I got interested in where I could take my performances and my recordings. By the time I was 19, I had recorded bins of cassette tapes. These tapes were primarily sound experiments and noise jams. As for performing, I started designing art installations and impromptu performances in public spaces and on stages. With graffiti, you are responding to a scenario and location, going in without really knowing what could happen and being on your toes, prepared to react.



"Ten tier pounds" (2018): Ten ink pours dumped through ten layers of salvaged jersey material stretched on wooden frames

What is your favorite part of being a creator in Windsor?

I enjoy being a creator in Windsor because of the tight artistic community we have here. Once you start getting involved and going to events and meeting people, you can start to carve your path in the arts community. Windsor is not a very large city, so the amount of competition isn't as high as other places. I believe this allows creators in the area to be extra creative and try new things.



“Jellyfish and Plasticback whale” (2021):
Salvaged ink, cotton



“Vile pile button up” (2021):
Cotton, mixed media

What are some challenges you face being based out of Windsor-Essex?

Being a creator in Windsor has many perks, especially since we're a border city right next to the US., but it's been challenging during the pandemic. Detroit has so much happening, including art, music, fashion, and food; it's truly a culturally rich city and full of inspiration. Not having good access to the States has been a bummer, but honestly, this caused me to look into what is going on in Windsor and to get more involved here.

What are potential projects you dream of being able to create in the future if there were absolutely no limitations?

I would love to build skate parks! I have been constantly conceptualizing the idea of taking my project “Washed Up World” and turning it into an art initiative/community participation project where we would clean up areas such as waterfronts, fields, and forests full of trash. We would then use the trash and build sculptures out of it, and later, we could auction off the sculpture and fund the construction of the parks. The sculptures would be able to stay at the parks or be brought to the investors' desired place. I would love to do this all over the world.



"4 layers of packaging peanuts" (2019):
Screen printed salvaged inks on salvaged fabric

What does your creative process entail?

I usually start by picking up items outside on my walks, or an event will happen and I will react to it with some sort of material. The materials I pick up and use are put through a series of different manipulation processes or used as a template to draw from, tracing and referencing the items from where I had picked them up. One thing I am very interested in is taking these items and applying them to the silkscreen printing process. When I take the items and shoot them to screens to be printed, I treat the application printing process as if I am making my type of camouflage. One of the main reasons why I like printing in clothing is because the person wearing the piece becomes part of the art and part of the performance.

How can our readers further support local creators in Windsor?

Go to events! Invite your friends to those events! Share posts and engage on social media! Buy products from local artists and creators! Speak highly about the artists you support!

Are there any artists you would love to collaborate with?

I would love to collaborate with major clothing brands like Vans and with cities if they are open to developing skateboard parks!



"Washed Up World" blue jacket (2021):
Mixed media



"Walked to and from" (2018): Scavenged pieces of garbage bonded with paint

Do you have any upcoming plans or events?

I'll be doing the Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market throughout the summer along with pop-ups in and around Windsor-Essex and hopefully out of the region too!

We thank Anthony for being our guest in the Spot On! interview series, and we look forward to seeing his future projects!

If you would like to see more of Anthony's work, you can find him on Instagram @anthony.difazio.

For more artist interviews and other Windsor-based projects, follow the Vanguard Youth Arts Collective on Facebook and Instagram @vanguard.collective and stay tuned for our next issue!