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The Urge to Create (and Change)

Andrea Luxton, president

“GIRL WITH BALLOON” BY THE ANONYMOUS ARTIST, KNOWN ONLY AS BANKSY, sold on October 4, 2018, at Sotheby’s for approximately $1.4 million. That was not the surprise, however. As the hammer fell, and to the shock of the onlookers, especially the purchaser, the picture started descending through a shredder hidden inside the frame. It stopped about halfway down but the original picture was gone. That was the surprise.

According to the painter, this was all part of his plan. Bansky included a caption with the shredder, “The urge to destroy is also a creative urge.” Ironically the purchaser still bought the picture, renamed Love in the Bin. Word on the street is that the value has only increased by this action, so maybe in this case destruction was creative—in one sense. Yet there is also a certain sadness in this story, a sense of loss.

As I reflect on this action by Bansky, I find myself deeply disagreeing with the concept that to destroy is a creative urge. I thought of the creativity that is on the Andrews University campus. Whether it is the creativity of our documentary film students who use that medium to share meaningful insights into difficult topics. Or the architecture students who design and build mobile clinics for mission fields in Africa. Or the journalism, photography and graphic art students who design and produce a prize-winning Christian journal, Envision. Or our religion and seminary students and faculty, who design and produce a prize-winning photography and graphic art students who design and produce a prize-winning Christian journal, Envision. Or our religious fields in Africa. Or the journalism, photography and graphic art students who design and produce a prize-winning Christian journal, Envision. Or our religion and seminary students and faculty, who design and produce a prize-winning

The creativity on this campus it is driven by a mission of passion for changing lives, changing communities. It is an urge, a mission that is not perhaps common. But it is a mission that is centered in the reality of knowing God as our creator and Jesus as our Lord. It is a creativity that seeks to build up humanity, create new hope even in a world that sometimes seems to focus more on self-destruction. Destruction is not part of this creativity, but creativity seeks to frame opportunity even where there is destruction.

I believe that this is where Adventist education, an Andrews University education, provides a very important and fundamentally different frame for education and careers that follow. This is not a superficial difference; it is critical to the way students approach their own lives, their church, their communities and the wider world. It is a very real and practical way, it is about discovering how to be God’s hands, God’s feet in a world that desperately needs creativity that leads to hope, healing, reconciliation and faith.
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by Gillian Panigot

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