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Editor's note: *This is part of a series of profiles for fall 2018 commencement. [Read about more graduates \(https://asunow.asu.edu/20181130-sun-devil-life-asus-fall-2018-graduates-are-ready-solve-big-problems\)](https://asunow.asu.edu/20181130-sun-devil-life-asus-fall-2018-graduates-are-ready-solve-big-problems).*

Hye Young Yun traces her story as an artist back to fifth grade, when she refused to let setbacks determine her fate during a national art competition.

"I chose an old black bronze statue as the subject of my work, and when I had finished my painting, I was very shocked at what I had drawn," said Hye Young, who graduates from Arizona State University this month with BFAs in drawing and in painting. "The painting, which I thought was going well, looked nothing like the subject. It was just a busy mess of black on paper, and I had realized this just 40 minutes before the competition ended. However, this wasn't something that pushed me to give up, because it was my passion."

She said she set the the competition aside and focused on just finishing the painting.

"I carefully re-observed the subject and found the subtle changes in black," she said. "Finally, I started to paint the subject again. When I saw the finished painting, I was very satisfied. In the end, I won the competition, and this became my aha moment."

That same persistence and hard work is what led Hye Young to ASU and to a second career in the arts.

Before moving to Arizona, she was a musician in South Korea. She received a degree in piano performance from Yeungnam University in South Korea in 1993, and as a music major overcame many obstacles, including a severe muscle injury in her arm. Despite the injury, she worked at a church as an accompanist until 2000, but struggling



Hye Young Yun.

with her condition, she no longer enjoyed the work. She quit her job and moved to Arizona with her two children. She decided to attend college again by taking the ESL program at Mesa Community College.

“As soon as I finished the ESL program, I jumped straight into a drawing class,” she said. “This was my second chance to achieve what I’ve always dreamed of.”

And as a student in the School of Art in ASU’s Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, she has excelled, even receiving five scholarships this year.

“Hye Young creates drawings of Korean culture and figures that go beyond my expectations as an instructor,” said Heidi Hogden, assistant professor. “Her innovative work in drawing, her scholarship and exhibition record and her passion make her an outstanding student and artist.”

Question: What’s something you learned while at ASU – in the classroom or otherwise – that surprised you or changed your perspective?

Answer: Many art students have gone through this. There comes a hard time to know how to express something that is deep inside through art. In this regard, the most valuable thing I’ve learned from my professors was how to deliver expression through my art.

Q: Why did you choose ASU?

A: There is a kind of a strong relationship with ASU (and my family). My husband had a doctorate degree of music at ASU. My son, Joseph, is a student with a scholarship at ASU. Therefore, I was glad to choose ASU.

Q: Which professor taught you the most important lesson while at ASU?

A: All professors are great mentors and supporters including Professors Hogden, Ellen Meissinger, Mark Pomilio and Henry Schoebel, and Instructors Tim Conte and Turner Davis. Professor Schoebel was the first professor I met at ASU, and I studied with him about the traditional painting method. Professor Meissinger always guided me in how to

express the artist's will while working. Professor Pomilio was a great mentor at the senior exhibition. He helped me to complete the most successful of my works. The work "Be Lost in an Old Memory I" was the powerful outcome that was deep inside me. I am currently working on drawing, and I am falling in love with life drawing. Professor Hodgen is a great supporter. She always encourages me to try something new and that makes me go beyond the limit. I was glad to know how to express many colors on a body with Instructor Conte. I was also glad to draw something that was not in a traditional way with Instructor Davis.

Q: What's the best piece of advice you'd give to those still in school?

A: There were many obstacles to study alone with my children in the U.S., but I was thankful to God for allowing me to be productive every day. I really agree that "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. But today is a gift. That is why people call it the present." I would like to say that every day of our lives is a miracle, so give thanks for a little.

Q: What are your plans after graduation?

A: After I finish the Post-OPT program that is given to me as an international student, I am going to apply to a graduate program of drawing. I cannot wait for the next step.

Q: If someone gave you \$40 million to solve one problem on our planet, what would you tackle?

A: I would like to spend the money for children who don't have a meal for a day.

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