

The Miami Prison

Lolita, also known as Tokitae, is the last living, captured orca, from the Southern Residents. The Southern Residents are on the endangered species list due to the era of live captures for sea parks. The most infamous of these captures was the Penn Cove incident. Tokitae was born in 1964 and has been trapped in the Miami Seaquarium since she was five or six years old. It was here that she was renamed Lolita. Lolita's tank is twenty feet deep and is illegally small for a 22ft long orca. The Miami Seaquarium could retire her into a sea pen to live a happier life in a more natural environment, but the Miami Seaquarium refuses to let her free. If we do not speak out she will spend the rest of her life in tank the size of a hotel swimming pool. To make a difference look at www.savelolita.org.

My motivation to paint Lolita was to bring awareness to her poor conditions. This painting shows Lolita performing in a show and being forced to leap up out of the water in front of an overwhelming crowd. Painting this piece means a lot to me as a person and as a student. My art is expressing Lolita in her unnatural surrounding. The opportunity to paint this painting means a lot to me because I'm now able to make an impact on Lolita's life. While visiting San Juan Island I experienced a pod of orcas just three feet from me. Not once but twice, and this was one of the most powerful moments of my life. Being out with the orcas and watching them swim miles has only made me more determined to help retire Lolita from her 35ft wide tank and into a sea pen.

Halie

