

DAY 17 | Motif: Vase

TITLE | "Solitary Confinement"

MEDIA | Canson Cold Press, Watercolor, Micro Pen

SIZE | 8 x 10

By Kim Anderson

#FEBCHALLENGE19

I came from the most restrictive environment in public schools in Kansas, from 1st grade through 12th grade. I experienced acute isolation, which I call solitary confinement. I was the only Deaf student in the schools I attended. I had no Deaf peers like me. I had no Deaf adult role models. I played alone at recess, I sat alone at lunch time. I had no access to either a spoken or signed language. This solitary environment created barriers, shackled me to where I could not even participate in group conversations or socialize naturally for intellectual stimulation and/or to pick up social cues of interacting with people. As this solitary confinement experience was prolonged, it had a significant impact on my intellectual and social emotional well-being. It affected my self-worth and self-confidence. I started having suicidal ideations. The single vibrant rose represents me as a Deaf child with the rose as my brain. The petals represent my intelligence, some falling to waste and missed intellectual opportunities. As I was confined, I was nurtured with bare necessities of water, to stay alive and conform within the vase of audistic expectations.

The best educational environment for a Deaf child is one that has administrators, educators, counselors, therapists, etc who are bilingually fluent in BOTH ASL & English, provide direct instruction, direct peer interaction, role models and hearing allies for academic and social emotional growth. Public schools do not provide that, hence they are the most restrictive environments (MRE). Schools for the Deaf provide it, hence they are the LEAST restrictive environment (LRE).