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Talented Students Honored at OAC Visual Arts Competition

By Jean Follmer



Pictured from left to right are: 1st Place Photography Andrew Moore - Miramonte Senior, 2nd Place 3D Marisa Rowland - Miramonte Senior, 2nd Place Photography Erin Cherry - Miramonte Sophomore, 1st Place 3D Michael Nohr - Miramonte Senior Photo Jean Follmer

Winners of the 2009 High School Visual Arts Competition were announced last Friday at the packed Orinda Library Gallery reception, hosted by The Orinda Arts Council (OAC). The 6th annual competition was open to all high school students living or attending school in Lamorinda, with more than 160 entries submitted this year by students from Bentley, Campolindo, Holden, Miramonte and Orinda Academy.

Miramonte Senior Andrew Moore was pleased with his first place win in photography. "I feel good. I can't find a job right now so it's good to have something (the prize money) for now," Moore said. He plans to attend Diablo Valley College in the fall and ultimately attend the California College of Art in Oakland.

Miramonte Sophomore Erin Cherry was clearly happy about her second place win in photography. Her piece, entitled "Winter Fairytale," featured a young girl posed in a sleeveless dress sitting on a dock covered in snow. Cherry said the photo was taken in Tahoe. "I saw the location and I'm just really into portraiture," she said.

Cash prizes totaling \$2,250 were awarded to the winners, including \$500 to each of the first place winners. Sixty of the students volunteered to sell their work,

priced at their discretion (60 percent of any proceeds go to the student artist, and 40 percent to the Orinda Arts Council "to sustain and continue programs like this one").

Judges based their decisions on creativity and originality, content, and degree of expertise in the chosen medium. Each of the judges are professionals who either teach, practice or represent expertise in the individual mediums.

Heidi Donner, who has worked for the Hearst Art Gallery at Saint Mary's College for 20 years, is a repeat judge for the OAC competition and says it fills a true need in the community.

"The demise of the County-wide exhibition at Sun Valley Mall took away one of the few opportunities for art students to have their work displayed for general audiences. There are very few venues where one can see works by students from several high schools representing diverse art media," said Donner. "The Orinda Arts Council exhibition is especially vital because it provides an important public opportunity to recognize and reward the many serious and talented art students in our area. It is always wonderful to see strong figurative work and large scale projects in two-dimensional work, and a love of the media's plasticity in three dimensional projects."

Erica Amundson, who teaches 2D and 3D art at Campolindo and Las Lomas High Schools, has been impressed by the high degree of organization in the show during the years that her students have participated, commenting on the worthwhile experience.

"It's not just that they got into an art show - it's that they got into a good show," said Amundson, who is personally doing a lot of drawing these days. "I'm in the throws of a big project - there's some sculpture but mostly drawing. I'm loving the whole new drawing movement right now."

Miramonte 3D teacher Gavin Kermode has attended the OAC Visual Arts Competition for several years. "It's nice for the students to actually see their work on display in a nice show like this one. It's one of the few shows that happens every year, so you can count on it," said Kermode, who has taught art at Miramonte for five years. "The support from the community, the parents and the students - I really couldn't ask for a better situation."

The artwork will be on display at the Orinda Library Gallery through April 30. Gallery hours of operation are Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

And the Winners Are...

2D - Painting, Drawing, Printmaking, Mixed Media

1st Place - Brianna Roberts, "Guilty", Bentley Senior

2nd Place - Jessie Guilford, "Untitled", Bentley Sophomore

3rd Place - Evan Hynes, "Trees", Campolindo Senior

Honorable Mentions - Brian Van Horn - Miramonte, Lily Williams - Miramonte, Emmelin M. Crespi - Miramonte, Da Zahn - Miramonte, Sosha Young - Miramonte, Kathleen Sullivan - Bentley, Molly Fischer - Campolindo, James Darling - Miramonte, Jessica Leimone - Miramonte

3D - Ceramics, Sculpture, Jewelry, Construction

1st Place - Michael Nohr, "Birth?", Miramonte Senior

2nd Place - Marisa Rowland, "Untitled", Miramonte Senior

3rd Place - Melissa Miyamoto-Mills, "Trastle", Miramonte Senior

Honorable Mentions - Deeqa Mohamed - Bentley, Alex Nielsen - Bentley, Emily Turrentine - Bentley, James Darling - Miramonte, Katie Kortright - Miramonte, Austens Thomposon - Miramonte, Isabel Zucker - Miramonte, Elizabeth Berger - Miramonte

Photography - Manual and all Digital Arts

1st Place - Andrew Moore, "The Artist's Life", Miramonte Senior

2nd Place - Erin Cherry, "Winter Fairytale", Miramonte Sophomore

3rd Place - Julia Wang, "Xianese", Bentley Junior

Honorable Mentions - Frankie George - Campolindo, Allyson L. Wright - Campolindo, Emma Harwayne - Holden, Moriah Hodges - Miramonte, Melissa Chenok - Miramonte, Jaymie Henson-Guerra - Miramonte, Olivia Moore - Miramonte, Alexander Perry - Bentley, Holland Taylor - Bentley, Keaton Kenel - Campolindo

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