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Art, Awe and Awards

By Laurie Snyder



"Chinatown Bicycle," created by Campolindo High School senior, Zack Watson, was awarded the Best of Show Award at the Orinda Arts Council's 2015 Visual Arts Competition. Photo Ohlen Alexander

other attendees what it's like to be "Lost" and "On Cloud Nine."

Event co-chairs Natalie Wheeler and Heidi Donner expressed gratitude to the all-volunteer team of judges who reviewed the students' work. "Many were busy professionals but took time to support the program, and were happy to be asked."

A key VAC goal, they explained, is to ensure that the arts remain an integral part of school curricula during America's increasing drive to strengthen STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning. "We want to keep the steam in STEM!" said Donner.

The must-see VAC exhibit runs through the end of March.

Competitions such as the VAC and other arts events for the community don't just magically happen. The Orinda Arts Council needs volunteers to help with everything from reception planning, marketing or catering to assisting students with their art installations. For more information, visit orindarts.org.

2015 Visual Arts Competition Winners

Best of Show: "Chinatown Bicycle," Zack Watson, Campolindo High School (12th grade)

1st Place: "Untitled, Jadey Sadoff, Acalanes High School (10th grade)

2nd Place: "Colorful Melancholy," Bella Gutman, Miramonte High School (12th grade)

3rd Place: "Lost," Bojana Rankovic, Las Lomas High School (12th grade)

Honorable Mentions: Klifford Ganancial and Laura Ramirez, Las Lomas (12 grade); Madeline Taylor, Campolindo (11th grade); Izzy Tankka, Acalanes (11th grade)

3D Category:

1st Place: "The Lichen Ladies," Nora Guergah, Miramonte High School (11th grade)

2nd Place: "Untitled," Brigid Berndt, Miramonte High School (10th grade)

3rd Place: "Kirin," Ara Walls, Campolindo High School (10th grade)

Honorable Mentions: Will Gittings, Miramonte (12th grade); Lydia Lapporte and Kathryn

Awe is an emotion typically reserved by adults for canyons grand, mountain majesties and life's epic moments of illumination. It is not a sensation most would expect to feel upon entering a teen art exhibit - but that is exactly what has been happening in Lamorinda for a dozen years as art lovers have arrived at the Orinda Library Art Gallery for the annual Visual Arts Competition.

Thanks to the training given to hundreds of highly creative students by local art teachers and the Orinda Arts Council's all-volunteer organization of its annual VAC each March, Lamorinda's teens have been making adults stop and think about everything from life's simple pleasures to what it means to be human in a world often devoid of humanity.

This year was no exception. The March 5 VAC awards ceremony was filled with moments of subdued thoughtfulness and the exuberance of teen creativity and pride in work well done as artists displayed "The Fire Burning in All of Us," and showed assembly member Catherine Baker and

McCarty,

Acalanes (12th grade); Grace Schmidt (9th grade)

Digital Design:

1st Place: "The Fire Burning in All of Us," Zachary Sandberg, Bentley Upper School (11th grade)

2nd Place: "Leap Posters," Sophia Spitulnik, Miramonte High School (12th grade)

3rd Place: "On Cloud Nine," Michelle Pang, Campolindo High School (12th grade)

Honorable Mentions: Klifford Ganancial and Bojana Rankovic, Las Lomas (12th grade)

Photography:

1st Place: "Untitled," Taylor Odom, Holden High School (12th grade)

2nd Place: "Smoke Bomb," Bojana Rankovic, Las Lomas High School (12th grade)

3rd Place (tie): "Gabrielle," Alannah Buyce, Campolindo High School (12 grade)

"Love Has No Gender," Kristen Kawaguchi, Miramonte High School (12 grade)

Honorable Mentions: Ana Glosson, Campolindo (11th grade); Kai Mills, Acalanes (10th grade)



California Assembly Member Catherine Baker (center) joins 2015 OAC Visual Arts Competition co-chairs, Heidi Donner (left) and Natalie Wheeler (right) in presenting the Best of Show Award to Zack Watson for "Chinatown Bicycle." Photo Ohlen Alexander

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