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## Pine-Richland High School AP art students showcase work at coffee shop



MICHAEL DIVITTORIO | Thursday, May 6, 2021 3:12 p.m.



PHOTOS: MICHAEL DIVITTORIO | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Pine-Richland senior Thomas Catalano's digital art was inspired by music.

With the covid pandemic hindering visitations at schools and limiting attendees of extra curricular activities, students have had a hard time showcasing their talents to the general public.

Fortunately, there are folks like Melissa Clack, parent of Pine-Richland High School senior Bayli Clack, creating new opportunities for the young learners.

Clack was able to partner with Rock 'n Joe Coffee Bar in Treesdale to exhibit many of the school's AP art students' projects throughout May.

"There was no (public) art show last year or this year," Clark said. "There is a virtual art show, but nothing in-person to actually experience the art. I have a senior, and I saw how disappointing that was. As a parent, that was disappointing, too. I asked if we could try and find a venue to host this. I talked to multiple places in the community. Ultimately, Rock 'n Joe was really on board with hosting something."

The art class has about 28 students and 15 opted to participate.

There was a grand opening for the exhibit on April 30. It will be up all month at Rock 'n Joe at 617 Warrendale Road.

"The shop's been trying to get a lot more connection with the community lately," said Mike Knafels, key holder at the coffee shop. "Being able to do this has been really nice to get people in and support what's going on with students. The live music we want to do, eventually, is the same way.

"We've been trying to partner with some of the students to get some of their bands in here. That way they can kind of get their name out and have fun with it. This is the first time we've been able to do it because covid restrictions are lightening up a bit more. ... I think a lot of (the displays) are really cool. I've liked art for a long time. To see some of these is neat."

Most of the artwork is digital drawings like the ones made by senior Thomas Catalano. He drew inspiration from music and various instruments.

"It's not called anything right now, still working on it," Thomas said. "It's to (show) how drummers get so crazy with the way they improvise and how other instruments stick to performing with sheet music. Drummers have to improvise at the moment and swing at anything they can hit. It's supposed to be more of jazz. It resembles so much free will and the idea of embracing creativity in general.

"I've never really done something like this in front of a lot of people with my art. Seeing the reaction from everyone and how much support there is behind the art is amazing."

Bayli's artwork is near the main entrance. It is a combination of digital illustration and traditional pen work.

The concentration of her series is on attention deficit disorder through virtual learning and the random intrusive thoughts that come from staring at a computer all day.

"I really like how it ends up working together, but also clashing," Bayli said. "I ultimately wanted to pick a concept that would allow me to draw whatever I was feeling like, but still have that overall concept that they all went together that we need to have for the AP exam. I knew I wanted it to have a sketched unfinished look, but at the same time feel finished when you look at it. The two mediums working together accomplish that the best.

"I was really glad that we got the opportunity. It's really neat to hear people talking about your work and asking you questions about it and interacting with it overall. It feels really special that everything you've worked so hard on is finally getting seen by so many people."

Jen Russell of Pine Township was one of those people. She said she had never been to the coffee shop before, and wanted to support the students. Her daughter, Nora Russell, is a junior at Pine-Richland and friends with one of the artists.

“The kids are really creative,” Russell said. “I was impressed by the amount of time it took for them to produce the show. I am excited that they got to share their gifts with the community.”

There are also photography displays and some sculptures, such as the ones made by senior Hailey Rihn. She drew inspiration from Disney and partnered versions of its characters with cakes and sweets. She also has some digital art.

“As a kid growing up, Disney inspired me so much, and I always wanted to work with the company,” Hailey said. “In my work, I showed how Disney’s helped me through difficult times with my struggle with anxiety and being bullied in school. Disney’s always been such a magical place for me.”

People can purchase the artwork, and there is a way to leave online feedback for the artists. Attendees can scan a code posted in the coffee shop and leave comments.

The coffee shop is open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

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