

Student Artists Wow at 2014 Visual Arts Competition

By Laurie Snyder



Recognized for their excellence in creativity and originality, content, and degree of expertise displayed during the 2014 Orinda Visual Arts Competition were, from left (back): Jane Fessenden, Miramonte High School, 2nd place, 2D category for "Cinco de Mayo"; Anna Fenske, Campolindo High School, 2nd place, photography for "Surface Markings"; Will Gittings, Miramonte, Honorable Mention, 3D category for "Nature's Music"; and front: Saarah Slechta, Campolindo, 1st place, photography for self-portrait; Emily LaRoche, Bentley Upper School, Best in Show for untitled. Photos Ohlen Alexander

Nearly \$2,400 was awarded to 22 artists during the 2014 Orinda Visual Arts Competition, sponsored by the Orinda Arts Council (OAC). But as any of the winning student artists will tell you, the true prize is the

opportunity to have their work shown in a professional space – the Orinda Library Art Gallery. "The professionals have a three-year waiting period. That's how far booked in advance this gallery is," said OAC co-president,

Lawrence Kohl, at the March 12 VAC reception. Judges reviewed more than 210 submissions for this competition, which was chaired again by OAC member, Natalie Wheeler. Those works will continue sparking wonder through March 27.

This year's Best in Show/Viewer's Choice Award was claimed by Emily LaRoche, who combined paint and wax paper to create a mixed media collage which evokes the ways in which the status quo masks human individuality. "I was thinking of calling it *Lost in Formation*," said LaRoche of the initially untitled work. Women, she explained, are often "so edited to fit societal expectations that their true selves are lost." The 11th grader from Bentley Upper School first attracted attention last year when another of her works, *Welcome Home to Paradise*, was chosen as the winner from the 11th Congressional District in the U.S. Congressional Art Competition. That digital inkjet print from silver-gelatin image scan went on to hang in the U.S. Capitol building, and has inspired other students to submit their works for consideration this year. For more information about the federal competition, contact Adrienne Ursino in Congressman George Miller's office: (925) 602-1880.



Las Lomas High School junior, Lauren Fitterer, was awarded an Honorable Mention in the 2D category for her work, "thoughts."



More reason to smile for Emily LaRoche. A 2013 U.S. Congressional Art Competition Winner (11th District), LaRoche's latest dazzler was judged Best in Show by the public at the 2014 Orinda Visual Arts Competition



"One of the great High School Visual Arts Comp works at Orinda Library," Tweeted the Orinda Arts Council March 7 about this untitled piece by Campolindo High 12th grader, Ashley Bernardo.

2014 Visual Arts Competition Winners

Best in Show – Viewers' Choice Award

Untitled, Emily LaRoche – Bentley Upper School, 11th Grade

2D

- 1st Place *Meat Shop*, Courtney Daum – Campolindo High School, 12th Grade
- 2nd Place *Cinco De Mayo*, Jane Fessenden – Miramonte High School, 12th Grade
- 3rd Place *Untitled*, Arianna Ninh – Acalanes High School, 11th Grade

Honorable Mentions: *Untitled*, Haley Marx (Miramonte, 12th Grade); *False African Violet*, Margot Mai (Miramonte, 12th Grade); *thoughts*, Lauren Fitterer (Las Lomas, 11th Grade)

3D

- 1st Place *Brown Boots*, Katrina Salinas – Acalanes, 12th Grade
 - 2nd Place *Untitled*, Gavin Rock – Campolindo, 11th Grade
 - 3rd Place *Memento moire*, Daniell McCann – Acalanes, 12th Grade
- Honorable Mentions: *Slinky Dog*, Mariah Brown (Campolindo, 9th Grade); *Nature's Music*, Will Gittings (Miramonte, 11th Grade); *The Key to the Future*, Misaki Kobayashi (Miramonte, 10th Grade)

Photography and Digital Design

- 1st Place *Self Portrait*, Saarah Slechta – Campolindo, 12th Grade
- 2nd Place *Surface Markings*, Anna Fenske – Campolindo, 12th Grade
- 3rd Place *Melancholic Dreams*, Shahong Lee – Bentley Upper, 11th Grade

Honorable Mentions: *Cogita*, Jonathan Rowland (Campolindo, 12th Grade); *Yellow Jacket*, Santi Cabrera (Campolindo, 10th Grade); *Freedom In Her Eyes*, Hanna Schoenberger (Campolindo, 12th Grade); *Pensive*, Hannah Berger (Campolindo, 11th Grade); *The Water Cycle*, Sophia Spitulnik (Miramonte, 11th Grade)

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