

2019 High School Show Awards:
Judge's Comments ~ Professor Mike Jabbur

Arianna Low
Bruton High School

First Place – Dark Shapes, *Digital Photo*
This piece embodies so many of the qualities I laid out in my juror's statement, while also transcending its subject matter. While it is representational, it is also both highly graphic and moody, while exhibiting excellence in technical photographic processes.

Mystic Worthington
Jamestown High School

Second Place – Ambivalence, *Watercolor and Ink*
Ambivalence captures incredible control over the watercolor medium, pushing aqua blues next to oranges without becoming muddy. But I was most drawn to the freedom in the line quality, moments of unexpected color, areas where the imagery is lost and found, and the overall airiness of the composition.

Jennifer Tisdale
Jamestown High School

Third Place – Big Blue, *Polymer Clay, Acrylic Paint*
I found this piece to be incredibly provocative. While it certainly exhibits exceptional craftsmanship, I was drawn to the striking gesture, and the ambiguity of the creature's gesture. Is it to be feared, or caught in a moment of fright? Should I feel intimidated, or experience pathos? I'm drawn to the mystery of the narrative.

Derek Doelling
Bruton High School

Merit Award – Seoraksoan National Park, *Digital Photo*
I'm drawn to this photograph's bold composition, as well as the soft, airy forms in the foreground that feel so painterly. This piece transports me to that national park.

Micah Hicks
Bruton High School

Merit Award – Sheer, *Digital Photo*
This photograph captures a moment. The image is rich with feeling and mood...it is soft, ghostly, nostalgic, and quiet. And I'm attracted to how the subject matter—the sheer curtain—reinforces the emotional qualities of the overall image.

Camryn Keyes
Bruton High School

Merit Award – Car Wash, *Digital Photo*
I first responded to the beautiful, high-key colors of this photograph. But the use of selective focus is what I find most interesting. The in-focus raindrops scattered across the picture plan against the out-of-focus landscape in the background creates an extreme pulling forward of the foreground and pushing backward of the background. It's optical and pictorial.

Madeline Knowles
Jamestown High School

Merit Award – Transparency, *White Pencil*
I'm interested in how this piece both linear and graphic. I get the impression the artist engaged very deeply in the act of looking, taking on very challenging subject matter. I am able to feel the softness, the roundness, and the volumes of these bottles and jars.

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Olivia Laubscher
Warhill High School

Merit Award – Pop, Watercolor Paint
I was initially drawn to the strong composition and bold monochromatic color scheme. It is charming without seeming trite. But what holds my attention is the suggestion of narrative. Is this illustration about anticipation? Patience? With a longer viewing, it slowly transcends illustration, which so often stops at the point of description.

Chloe Swan
Lafayette High School

Merit Award – Our Connection (1/2) (2/2), Mixed media
I'm especially drawn to the photograph in the diptych with the two figures in the lawn with yellow, scratched out eyes. It has a bold Pop sensibility. And I'm lured into the moment, which is both quirky and disturbing. The narrative is unclear, and I am interested in where that open narrative takes my imagination.

Chloe Wilmoth
Warhill High School

Merit Award – Feel the Rhythm, Batik: Wax & Dye
I am struck by this piece's graphic and playful qualities, as well as the overall softness. I find the color relationships beautiful, and there is a rhythm and energy to the piece, but also tranquility.

Sidney Wolosonowski
Walsingham Academy

Merit Award – Body of Work El Esqueleto, pastel; Birb, Charcoal
While the skeleton is a common subject for academic drawing, this piece stands out to me because it is both a close formal study—the artist really looked—yet they also created a strong composition, drawing my eye in and around the entire drawing.

It was a great pleasure to judge this show, especially because of the opportunity to recognize young artists whose work shows such great potential. I did not walk into the gallery with specific categories in mind, i.e. best painting or best ceramic work, best still life or best self-portrait. Nor did I enter with specific criteria to be used as a checklist, such as excellence with regard to formal issues, conceptual framework, or technical ability. Rather, I first looked for work that jumped out at me as visually compelling, what pulled me in for a closer look, and what sustained my interest after that initial look. Many of what I feel are the strongest works involve a close observationally-based formal study, wherein the expression was felt by the artist, the composition is strong, or there is a compelling use of elements such as line or color. Other pieces of note were chosen because they successfully captured a feeling, be it liveliness, playfulness, introspection, or uneasiness, but without coming across as overtly literal. Knowing just how much information to give a viewer can be challenging, and I tend to be drawn to work that requires an active viewer to complete the experience. Bold color investigations, or the capturing of an unexpected moment were among the other qualities that set some work apart. I believe there are no fixed rules that determine whether a piece of art is successful or not; subjectivity certainly seems to play a role. My areas of interest are broad, both in terms of subject matter and style. But I am repeatedly drawn toward mystery, subtlety, expression, and cohesion. I am sure these preferences played a role in my award selections.

Mike Jabbur