

Art grads show off their best work in Carter and Kolbe show



By Brock Weir

How many students does it take to recreate a Jackson Pollock masterpiece?

For St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School's fine arts students, the answer is 17 ? each with two minutes.

?It sounds like the biggest mess on the planet at first, but we primed a four foot by six foot canvas and allowed each student two minutes to attack the canvas with the paint they want and the only objective was you couldn't physically touch the canvas,? says St. Max art teacher Carlos Viaes. ?The end result was a piece of art that was created by 17 students, all serving the purpose of trying to recreate a similar masterpiece inspired by Pollock.?

The resulting team effort forms a focal point to Art Grads 2015, a new exhibition at the Aurora Cultural Centre spearheaded by the graduating art students of both St. Max and Cardinal Carter Catholic High School.

The show, which will be followed by a second installment featuring the works of students from Aurora High School and Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School later this month, opened Wednesday, with its formal opening reception slated for this Thursday, January 8, at 7 p.m.

This is the second year running upcoming St. Max graduates have put together a show of their work, but there are some new twists this year on what they have to offer. Each student will bring their own perspective to their work, says Mr. Viaes, but they have branched out to include a gallery of work created by their school's design class which focuses on different elements of design and the applied arts, rather than just the fine arts on tap last year.

?We have redesigns for old album covers, bringing in a new interpretation to them,? he says. ?There are also fashion illustrations, playing with a theme, playing with concepts and interpreting them through fashion. We also got the opportunity to play with sculptural pieces where students were given the task to create somewhat of a do-it-yourself recycled art project that could be used within a home as a sculptural piece.

?Students had full control. They consistently went with whatever theme they felt passionate about. The ones who had a certain connection or passion with that theme or concept were able to depict it in the most effective manner.?

One theme student Alessia Carinci felt particularly passionate about was mental health. Alessia helped bring the show together with fellow student Jacqueline Cherubini, and she channeled this passion through sculptural work depicting pill bottles.



"I know people who deal with different mental illnesses and I feel that is a discussion that needs to be had because there is a lot of stigma attached to mental illness," explained Alessia.

Together, she and Jacqueline volunteered to curate the exhibition choosing the best and most varied pieces amongst their work to dot the walls of the Cultural Centre.

"This has been a pretty cool experience," says Jacqueline. "I have never done this before. It was hard sometimes because some of the students don't care as much as the others, but when you really get everything together it is cool to see it become something this big."

Seeing everything come together is also heartening for Mr. Viaes, who underscores the dedication each of the students have to making sure it is a show they can call their own, and to show to the community the best of what they do.

"When you have two kids this committed, that are this focused to make this work for themselves and everyone at the school, that is the bigger than any lesson you are going to teach because they have learned a skill and they have been able to create something and do something that is going to be appreciated over two weeks by anyone who chooses to come in, and they know they have had a significant impact."

Adds Alessia: "I hope people appreciate the art and see that this high school isn't just about rugby and football because that is all I hear on the announcements. There is art, there is culture, and people are thinking things."