

# Community Support for the Arts Benefits Winners of Harlin Museum High School Art Show

Featured in photo, from left to right:

Larry Lindeman, Harlin Museum Board Member, accepting a \$550 donation for the Harlin Museum's High School Art Show from Mega Motorsports General Manager, Luke Stokes, and other members of the [Mega Motorsports](#) team

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As one of the few annual student art events that were able to continue as scheduled during pandemic precautions, the Harlin Museum's 2021 High School Art Show has been a bright spot in the school year of many local area art students. After a year unlike any other our communities have ever experienced, this taste of the familiar became both a welcome opportunity for students to shine and a generous example of how prioritizing support for local community programs, like those offered at the Harlin, can make all the difference during these difficult times to help us all move forward.

This year's show overcame several odds before making its way to the gallery walls. To begin with, many area art teachers were originally going to forgo entry this year—as budget cuts had drastically affected their departments and many students could not afford to frame their entry pieces themselves—until the decision was made by museum staff to relax the guidelines for entry to the show in favor of inclusiveness.

“It’s more important that students get the opportunity to participate in the show—to have the experience of seeing their artwork on display and allowing others to enjoy it—than for the gallery to be filled with perfectly framed pieces. The point of the High School Show is to show appreciation for the art and the artists that create it and to encourage the students to express themselves creatively. With all the challenges we’ve faced in the past year, both individually and as a community, we knew that there was a lot of growth happening, and that the artistically inclined of us out there would be expressing ourselves by way of our art—and that those pieces would be special,” said Vicki Warren-Martin, president of the museum’s board of directors, “and we were right. The pieces in this show were some of the most creative we have ever displayed, and many of them touch on current events. The High School Show never disappoints. It’s always sharp and expressive and full of creativity. These kids have amazing talent and our schools have some stand-out teachers. We were thrilled to be able to make it happen and give everyone a chance to share that talent with the public.”

So, by relaxing guidelines and allowing unframed pieces to be entered for competition, while also offering free frames to any student or teacher that wanted some from the museum’s available selection, students from six area schools were able to enter their art pieces for the competition. With a total of 72 entries between 2 divisions, the show features art from students at West Plains High School, Thayer High School, Mountain Grove High School, Mtn. View/Birch Tree/Liberty High School, Willow Springs High School, and Koshkonong High

School.

Each piece was judged using a points-based system, giving a score out of a total possible 200 for the four areas of design & composition, technique/skill of construction, presentation, and creativity & originality. The two judges for this year's competition were former WPHS art teacher, Rhonda Richter, and former president of the WP Artist Guild, Angela Bullard, both of whom are currently practicing artists.

The other issue that posed a problem for the show was one of funding. The museum, which is a volunteer-run non-profit, experienced a rather difficult year in 2020 that included an extended closure which cost them hundreds in donated funds. Each competition art show is expected to offer prize money to place winners, which can easily cost upwards of \$500 per show, and the Harlin's operating budget fluctuates from donation to donation, making it an almost constant requirement for museum staff to be fundraising and seeking sponsorships. But, at a time when so many people are in need, it can be difficult to find people who are willing and able to give back.

Warren-Martin commented on the critical situation facing arts institutions across the country, including their own

**“If it were not for the generosity of our sponsor for the high school show there would not have even been a show this year. While there are some great opportunities in grant funding for institutions like ours, there is also a great deal of competition for that money and not nearly enough of it to go around. Add to that the expenses of simply keeping the doors open in a place like this—especially if you are dealing with older buildings or antiquated systems that constantly**

require repairs—and it goes downhill fast. A lot of your smaller, local museums are being forced to close because they cannot cover their losses from the past year of upheaval—the obstacles are just too great. And with every museum or gallery that closes, it's another loss to communities that don't have a lot left to lose. Collections are being sold to pay debts—and history is being lost. But, luckily, the Ozarks is the type of place that looks after their own. We've truly been fortunate. We've had local patrons and business owners step up and reinvest in their community by supporting us, and, in doing so, they've invested in our mutual future and we're just so grateful for it."

It was the generosity of West Plains local business, Mega Motorsports, that came to the rescue of the museum (and the hopeful students entering the show) to help defray show costs, covering prize amounts for all 26 places awarded during the show, including Best of Show, 3 Judge's Awards of Distinction, and 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place in 5 separate categories, making for a truly special and memorable event for all involved and giving seniors a final highlight to look back on with pride.

The winning entries of Harlin's 2021 High School Art Show are as follows:

**Best of Show** – *The Arabian Mona Lisa* – R. Nicole Coats – West Plains High School

## **2D Division**

### **Drawings**

1st – A Walk Without You – Li Burkhardt – Mtn. View/Birch Tree/Liberty High School

2nd – Empty Mind – Rachel Burke – West Plains High School

3rd – Deep Gaze – Megan Broos – Mtn. Grove High School

#### Honorable Mentions

Felix Kjellberg -Alyssa Harrington -Mtn. Grove High School  
Man's Best Friend – Lydia Davis – Mtn. View/Birch  
Tree/Liberty High School

#### **Paintings**

1st – Capri – Skyler Todd – Thayer High School

2nd – Nightwalk – Alyssa Harrington – Mtn. Grove High  
School

3rd – Strawberry Jam – Conner Quimby – Conner Quimby – West  
Plains High School

#### Honorable Mentions

The Light in Her Eyes – Li Burkhardt – Mtn. View/Birch  
Tree/Liberty High School

Kenna – Katlynn Ritchie – Mtn. Grove High School

#### **Mixed Media**

1st – Expression Bird – Dezarie Davis – Thayer High School

2nd – The 60's – Rachel Burke – West Plains High School

3rd – UTV – Dezarie Davis – Thayer High School

#### Honorable Mention

Untitled #1 by S. Caldwell – Skyla Caldwell – Thayer High  
School

#### **3D Division**

#### **Sculpture**

1st – Silent Smile – Justice Dawe – West Plains High School

2nd – Punizione'della Nature – Rachel Burke – West Plains  
High School

3rd – A Cracked Rose – Natalie Wiehe – West Plains High

## School

### Honorable Mentions

Jim Carrey Mask – Teagan Phelps – Thayer High School

Sunflower Morning Coffee – Courtney Crivello – Thayer High School

### Textiles

1st – Star Shopping – Skyler Todd – Thayer High School

2nd – Kaw Kaw – Skyla Caldwell – Thayer High School

3rd – Happy Daze – Teagan Phelps – Thayer High School

### Judges Awards of Distinction

Silent Smile – Justice Dawe – West Plains High School

Capri – Skyler Todd – Thayer High School

Felix Kjellberg – Alyssa Harrington – Mtn. Grove High School

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The Harlin's 2021 High School Art Show is on display in the museum's Hathcock Gallery until March 4th, at 3 pm. The museum is located at 405 Worcester, West Plains, MO 65775, about a block southwest of West Plains' downtown Court Square. Those who are interested in becoming a sponsor for museum events can contact Vicki Warren-Martin directly at [v.martin@harlinmuseum.com](mailto:v.martin@harlinmuseum.com) or may phone the museum at (417) 256-7801.