

Beacon College Student Exhibition —Judge's Statement

Choosing awards for any art exhibition never gets easier. I always approach the task with a bit of trepidation. While every judge approaches this with somewhat different criteria, there are often similarities. With a student exhibition, and the recognition that many of the pieces were class projects, one of the most important factors is whether the work holds together as an interesting and unique work outside of the context of the classroom. Other important factors are craftsmanship and technique, individual expression, and unique individual qualities that draw the viewer back to the piece for a second or third look.

As far as craftsmanship and technique go, there are several pieces that stand out in their knowledge and use of the medium. Emily Marra's "Koi Fish" cast glass, and "Still Life" drawing, Marcos Allan's "Skeleton Hand" construction, and Connor Cremo's "Wooden Cubes" sculpture all exhibit wonderful handling of the specific media. The realism of the first two and precision of construction of the second two show great skill.

Still, art is never simply about realistic representation and fine craft. Personal expression and use of the medium also draw a viewer in. _____'s "Abstraction" pastel drawing is an excellent example of this. It is aggressive and wild in its conception. It whirls around in such a frenzy that the artist even tore the paper a little while making it. The very act of creating the work is a large part of its success. It also has rhythm and balance in its composition, so that it is not completely chaotic, but engaging and something one wants to view multiple times. Similarly, _____'s "Clouds" ink drawing is deceptively simple. It handles value, texture, rhythm, and repetition through some simple mark making and what seems to be a more asymmetrical balance. When really analyzing the composition it is possible to find underlying implied lines and shapes that create a movement that keeps the viewer engaged in more than a passing glance.

Whimsy and personal vision are also important factors when creating art. Elana Karol's "Squid" painting has that element of personal vision. It seems to be some prehistoric illustration, but personal style makes it so much more than an illustration. Many elements coalesce in Elana's "Carousel" sculpture. Reminiscent of Alexander Calder's famous "Circus," this is still a truly unique work. It seems childlike and nostalgic, but the fusion of disparate materials to form easily recognizable symbols of each animal is more sophisticated than might first be understood. The ability to create something that seems quite simple and easy is actually more difficult than the average viewer recognizes. Further inspection of the work reveals the significant time investment in its creation. It may be a diminutive piece, but the size should not allow one to overlook it.

In the end, judging this show was a pleasant experience. Many more pieces were just edged out of receiving awards, and another judge may easily have chosen different works. With a limit of awards, narrowing down is always difficult. Beacon College students should be proud of the work they are creating and encouraged to keep striving to that next level within their art.

