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Gardner-Webb University Artists Participate in the Annual Cleveland County Artists Competition

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Office of University
Communications

June 15, 2017

Several GWU Affiliates Receive Awards for Their Artwork Submissions

By Emily Eidson ('18), GWU Intern for Communications

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Currently, the Cleveland County Arts Council is hosting its annual Cleveland County Artists Competition. The exhibit provides local artists with an opportunity to display their own creations and compete for numerous awards. Many Gardner-Webb professors, staff, students, and alumni are exhibiting artwork in this year's competition, and several have already received some prestigious honors.



Self-Portrait by GWU Sophomore Ian McCall

Artists from GWU include Paula Spangler Casper, Associate Professor of Art; Susan Carlisle-Bell, Professor of Art; and Doug Knotts, Professor of Art and Chair of the Art Department, as well as various students and alumni. These participants have submitted artwork of almost all mediums from acrylic paintings to sculptures to fabric works.

Bell believes that the exhibition is a great way for students and professors alike to gain experience, and that the event ties in perfectly with the well-crafted curriculum of the GWU Art Department. “The art curriculum includes studio and historical studies and students learn to prepare exhibitions, digital portfolios and art majors also write a thesis about their artistic influences and their own work,” Bell declares.

The competition offers participants a chance to express their various styles and unique abilities as artists, while also providing the GWU Arts Department with a means of engaging with fellow members of the art world. “The Art Department has a strong relationship with the artist community,” Bell explains. “It is amazing to see the talent and variety of mediums and expression that is showcased.”



Hot Blues by GWU Professor of Art Susan Bell

Bell is showcasing three works of her own in this year's competition, including an acrylic painting entitled Hot Blues. Using a mix of acrylics and charcoal contour lines to create a picturesque image of a musician, the painting “captures without pretense the rich emotion and sound of an improvisational moment in time,” according to judge Eldred Hudson.

Similar to her other works, Bell wanted to illustrate the importance of finding joy in the things around her in this particular piece. As Hudson describes, “The pure joy and effortlessness of the musician is reflected in the artist’s technique which is both skilled and impressive.” The piece won an honorable mention award in the exhibit.

Several other Gardner-Webb artists were honored at the event, including Chrys Riviere Blalock, a former teacher for the Art Department, who won first place for his oil painting called Creek Pool, and Ian McCall, a sophomore student, who was awarded third place for his pastel painting entitled Still Life.

According to Hudson, the individual pieces clearly display the hard work and devotion of each artist. “I am impressed with the overall level of experimentation and apparent love of art-making so many of your citizens demonstrate. I applaud ALL who prepared and submitted work and hope each of you will continue your creative journey.”

Last Ride by GWU
Associate Professor of Art
Paula Spangler Casper

For more information about the Cleveland County Artists Competition, contact the Cleveland County Arts Council at: Cleveland County Arts Council, 111 S. Washington St., Shelby, NC 28150. Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (704)-484-2787; www.ccartscouncil.org

Youth with Long Neck by GWU
Professor of Art Doug Knotts

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