

FAIRPLEX

ArtReach Celebrates 5th Anniversary at Fairplex Over 250 artists, diverse art activities and more featured March 5-27, 2016

POMONA, CA (Feb. 17, 2016) - The Millard Sheets Art Center, a program of The Learning Centers at Fairplex, is proud to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the highly anticipated ArtReach art exhibition and to announce the theme for the upcoming spring show, scheduled to run March 5-27, 2016. The event, located in the Millard Sheets Gallery, will beautifully display a dynamic selection of over 250 two- and three-dimensional artwork inspired by the theme *The Art of Metaphor*.

Since 2012, ArtReach has recognized and showcased the talent of local high school students. This year, 40 art teachers from 27 different high schools representing 14 school districts submitted 750 artworks that challenged students to express their creative voices about the world around them through the use of visual metaphors.

“ArtReach has become the most unique community-focused regional art exhibition in Southern California. Although it’s still fairly new, the exhibition has become very popular, attracting thousands of talented high school students from surrounding communities,” says Lugene Whitley, the exhibition’s curator. “This year’s theme invites a broad range of interpretations, through ceramics and sculpture to photography, painting and more. Every year, we're thrilled to showcase these young artists’ thoughtful and beautiful artwork created around universal themes that connect us all.”

ArtReach is divided into the following three main sections:

The front gallery includes a large installation piece designed each year by the curator that allows 200 additional students the opportunity to participate in ArtReach, some of whom may not have the training yet to compete in the main exhibition. We started this in our second year, with *The Art of Food*, and it was such a hit, it has become an important part of ArtReach. Since there is no selection process for this piece, all who submit will be in the installation. This year, the installation piece is named “LIFE IS...” which requires students to create an artwork on canvas boards that metaphorically completes the statement.

The main exhibition will consist of 197 2-D and 57 3-D artworks. All mediums are eligible if they were created in a high school art class under the guidance of an art teacher. In addition to drawing and painting, ceramics and sculpture, photography and digital media, including film/video, we've also accepted brass, jewelry, textiles and wood.

The third installation piece has been included since the inception of ArtReach and showcases the work of five high school special education classes. The curator designs the project and materials are provided by the art center. This year's installation includes the work of 62 special education students who

completed the statement, "I AM..." in their artwork. We believe this is a wonderful opportunity not only for the students but also for the audience to think about how special-needs students see themselves and the world around them.

In the last 5 years, the number of participating school districts has increased by 75 percent, the number of artwork submissions by 80 percent and the special education installation piece has tripled in student participation.

A panel of six judges selected award-winning artworks based on creativity and originality, dialogue with the theme and composition and technical ability. More than \$4,000 in cash prizes will be awarded at the opening reception.

"To go through the creative process of making a piece of artwork that fits a specific theme, write an artist statement, and submit work that goes through a juried selection process is quite challenging for anyone," says Tamara Kirkpatrick, drawing and painting teacher at Claremont High School. "ArtReach provides a unique and real-world experience for art students."

Participating communities include Baldwin Park, Chino, Chino Hills, City of Industry, Claremont, Covina, Fontana, Glendora, La Verne, Pomona, Rancho Cucamonga, Riverside, San Dimas, South El Monte, and West Covina. The artwork from special needs students at Covina, Claremont, Workman, Kaiser and Bonita high schools will also be featured in the exhibit.

The opening reception and awards ceremony is open to the public and will be held Saturday, March 5, 6-9 p.m. Regular exhibition hours are Friday-Sunday, noon-5 p.m. The exhibition is free to attend. Parking is at Gate 1 on McKinley Ave.

For more information on *ArtReach*, contact Lugene Whitley at (909) 532-0168 or lugenewhitley@aol.com.

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About Fairplex:

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