

Personal best

Self-portrait show lets student artists shine

This is Clare Flynn's third Self-Portrait Show. Clare also has exhibited in the La Salle Art Exhibit at Christian Brothers High School and in the California State Fair art exhibition.

By Clare Flynn
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS HIGH SCHOOL

It's a brisk winter night as I walk through the door of a little brick art gallery in midtown Sacramento. Inside, it's warm and inviting, and the room is full of high school students, teachers, parents and friends.

The walls are covered in a variety of self-portraits, done not by professional artists but by high school students. I notice that some of the pieces are very similar, probably done as a school project, while others cover almost an entire wall or hang as sculptures from the ceiling. This is the High School Self-Portrait Show at 20th St. Art Gallery, where teenage artists get to stroll proudly past their own work in a professional art gallery.

For me, and for many young, aspiring artists, the Self-Portrait Show is the pinnacle of the art year. Unlike other high school students who engage in extracurricular activities, artists rarely get the opportunity to showcase their work in public.

Athletes have games attended by their loud and supportive fans, theater enthusiasts act in plays and musicals, and choir and band members perform in special concerts every year. Artists, on the other hand, do their work in the solitude of the home or classroom. Many students do not even know the talents of their friends and classmates unless there is a small display for art at



Sacramento Bee/Florence Low

Clare Flynn's 20th St. show self-portrait.

If you go

- **What:** High School Self-Portrait Show
- **When:** 6 to 9:30 p.m. Saturday
- **Where:** 20th St. Art Gallery, 911 20th St., Sacramento
- **Cost:** Free

their school. The Self-Portrait Show gives high school artists like me a chance to be recognized for their skill and love of art.

Behind the scenes of any art show, the artists must put thought, effort and skill into their work. As the deadline for submission approaches, I often find myself contemplating my own self-portrait in the early-morning hours of winter break.

What image of myself do I want to

project? Do I want it to be in a specific style – abstract, realistic, impressionistic? There also is the question of medium. Which medium am I most skilled in and will, at the same time, look good on the gallery walls and not take too long to finish? These questions are merely the preliminary steps to completing one's self-portrait.

The task of depicting oneself is also more difficult than most would expect. The artist knows his or her likes and dislikes, but what characteristics, of all of the complex things that make that person who he or she is, does that artist choose to depict? It's a dilemma – one that all artists must face to complete a self-portrait.

Many students who plan to submit their work to the show have also brought up the issue of complete strangers buying their self-portrait.

"That will be so weird if my face is hanging in someone else's house," they say. However, pleasant surprises can come from selling one's work.

When I came into the gallery last year, I was told that my work had sold. I was delighted to learn that a teacher had made the purchase, wishing to use my portrait to teach her students the style of painting I had used. The purchase came as a welcome surprise as I had expected to take my painting home after the show and store it somewhere in my already cluttered room.

By now we have completed our pieces, submitted them and been chosen for the show. When the show finally opens Saturday night, we will walk into the 20th St. Art Gallery, take in the scene, observe the other artists' approaches to making a self-portrait, and appreciate that a wonderful opportunity like this exists in Sacramento.



Sacramento Bee/Florence Low

Clare Flynn, 17, a senior at Christian Brothers High School, has her artwork included in the High School Self-Portrait Show at the 20th St. Art Gallery. The show runs through Saturday, which includes a closing reception.

1/25/07



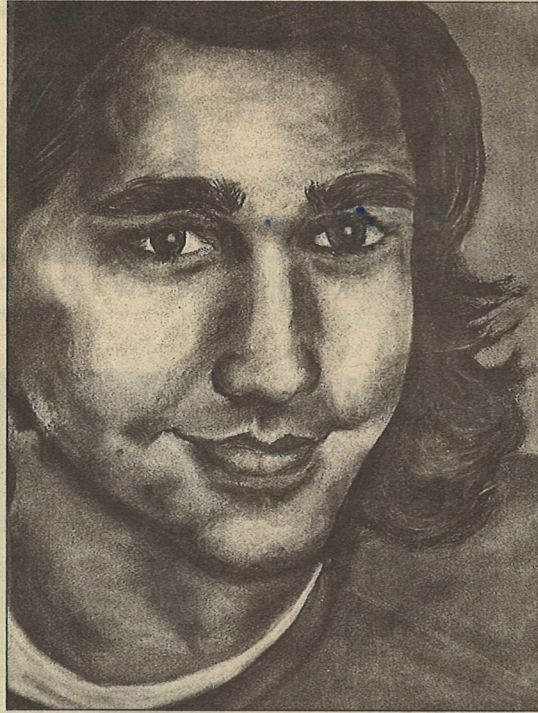
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FROM ART TO ANIMATION

From left, Percys Moran, a senior at Christian Brothers High School, and Bryan Caselli, also a senior at Christian Brothers, meet Bobby Podesta, an animator at Pixar Animation Studios, with Kevin McGovern, art instructor at Christian Brothers, in the lobby at Pixar Animation Studios in Emeryville. Podesta, a graduate of Christian Brothers, was a lead animator in the movie "Cars." Podesta also worked on the animated films "The Incredibles," "Finding Nemo," "Monsters, Inc." and "Toy Story II." Podesta was a student in McGovern's art class in the early 1990s.

2/15/07

AROUND THE REGION



Bryan Caselli's self-portrait, done in charcoal, won "Best of Show" and \$500 at the sixth annual High School Self-Portrait Show.

Courtesy of Kevin McGovern

Christian Brothers senior wins 'Best of Show' prize