

"Wild One" by Tyler, stencil and spray paint with acrylic on wood panel



Art has always marched to the rhythm of a universal heartbeat, the spirit of creative expression through a multitude of forms something that everyone shares. It's in that vein that 100th Monkey Studio (110 SE 16th Ave.) forged its Fifth Annual Youth Art Show—in conjunction with the studio's fifth anniversary—opening Friday, May 6. The exhibit of multimedia works features pieces by artists ages 18 and younger, and runs through Sunday, June 12.

100th Monkey Studio was founded with the desire to ignite artistic connections within the community by providing a space to create, view and discuss art. The studio offers a variety of workshops and classes, art therapy courses, a popular summer art camp and a youth art program that accommodates children ages one-and-a-half to six years old. This commitment to fostering youth art motivated 100th Monkey

Monkey Business

100th Monkey Studio partners with SMYRC for fifth annual art show BY RYAN J. PRADO

co-owner Beth Ann Short and curator Elizabeth Spavento to partner with the Sexual and Gender Minority Youth Resource Center (SMYRC) for this year's show.

"[SMYRC and 100th Monkey] have a similar philosophy in terms of using art as a way to explore different issues, or different kinds of situations involving identity," explains Spavento. "Not only because the Monkey has this youth art program, but also because it has a few art therapists that use the space to do healing through artistic and creative arts. We think we were in pretty good alignment with each other."

SMYRC's spotlighted contributions to the show were designed to center on the theme of how SMYRC has affected the artists' lives. Jess Herbach, the center's resource coordinator, explains that community-building alliances such as this assist in the efforts for marginalized young people to hurdle the isolation they normally experience, and to instead express themselves and their stories creatively.

"Often, due to a variety of circumstances, young people and marginalized people are not welcomed to tell their stories, share their art or be who they are publicly," says Herbach.

About a dozen submissions came from SMYRC through the center's drop-in art room, as well as from homes.

"Community events like this help change that," continues Herbach. "Building a network of incredible queer community support is crucial for people of all ages because it shows us that not only are there other queers out there, but that we care about each other, we care to hear each other's stories and we are eager to make that network of support even bigger."

Joining in on the opening and reception May 6 from 6 to 9 p.m. are representatives from the Oregon School for the Deaf. Following regular visits all school year from The Reclamation Project's Tim Combs—who provided education to the students about living a creative life, selling art, creating narrative pieces and submitting work to galleries—OSD submitted five pieces for the exhibit. Additionally, OSD is bringing the five finalists from the school's Poetry Out Loud competition to read during the reception. Poetry Out Loud (POL) is a national recitation contest in which Oregon was the first to include a School for the Deaf. Performances by young local musicians are also expected at the opening.

Members of the Regional Arts and Culture Council's Right Brain Initiative will hand out ribbons for Best in Show, Best Use of Media and Creative Content, but the exhibit isn't about awards. With pieces ranging from the finger-painting of a two-year-old to the more complex art musings of teens, for Spavento, the simple goal of providing an arts education and forum for youth is the ultimate reward.

"Art is a way not only to express yourself, but it helps spur creative thinking," says Spavento. "I think it's good to have students go through that process, of not only starting an idea but developing it ... where they learn about how to properly frame something and the process of having someone else evaluate your art, having it hung up on the walls. ... It's a way to open up the exhibition and curatorial process to all different kinds of young artists."

For Short, this year's event not only reinforces the studio's mission but exemplifies the range of services offered at 100th Monkey.

"Over the years we have been able to provide more art classes, camps, after-school programs and art therapy to individuals and families who wouldn't normally have had the resources to access creative services," explains Short. "Joy [Leising, co-owner] and I are excited that we have been able to see the evolution of services grow to the extent that they are today and can't wait to see what the future brings." ☐

For more info. about the Youth Art Show, visit the100thmonkeystudio.com or call 503-232-3457.

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