

## St. Andrew's School Student Art Opening

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Chaplain DeSalvo, Nick Watson, John Cochran, and Henry Weaver provide a guitar soundtrack for the art opening.



Victoria Conlin's painting turns the "damsel in distress" cliché on its head by casting a

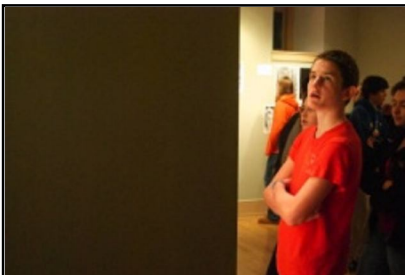
man as the "damsel".



Grace Gahagan's rockin' viola.



Ben Wainwright's piece casts pop star Lady Gaga as Fame personified.





Charcoal drawings by John McGiff's  
Drawing II class.



On Friday evening students, parents, faculty and staff members packed the Warner Gallery for an exhibition of student artwork. The walls were hung with charcoal drawings, paintings and photographs from all class levels, and the show was a testament to the hard work and creativity of all the students pursuing the arts at St. Andrew's. Chaplain Dave DeSalvo, Nick Watson '11, John Cochran '11, and Henry Weaver '12 provided musical accompaniment for the opening.

Senior painting majors had just completed their "icon" project; they each created an original composition exploring a popular image, icon, myth or figure of their choice. All of these pieces challenge the viewers to rethink their understanding of cultural clichés. Victoria Conlin's painting turns the "damsel in distress" cliché on its head: her "damsel" is a Roy Lichtenstein-esque male figure tearing his hair out over his much more realistically rendered wailing baby daughter.

Ben Wainwright explores the dark side of celebrity worship in his painting, which casts the mythic figure Fame as pop singer Lady Gaga. Ben's figure "tells us that pop culture has prerequisites, which may very well demand that we relinquish individual personality," Ben explains in his write-up on the piece. "Her mirror sunglasses warn of a two-pronged risk: the danger of losing ourselves in our own illusions of glamour; and the danger of investing devotion in a figure that clearly assigns us no importance."

Adam Shepherd's mixed media piece is a representation of "The St. Andrew's Bubble," an isolated community separate from the world. Adam's piece was designed, he explained, to remind bubble dwellers that "we must be able to see our community from an objective perspective . . . we must be able to step back and be aware and prepared for the world outside the bubble." Adam's piece takes a cosmic "step back"; a series of dangling planets lead up to his painting of St. Andrew's.

Ruth Fuqua, who chose the "Disney princess" as her icon, explores the implications of presenting an all-white cast of heroines for children to idolize as standards of beauty. Andrw Rippel's composition presents a series of symbols associated with America's war in the middle east - a folded American flag, a torn Army poster, a burning tank - out of their usual contexts. "This is an effort to show the misconceptions associated with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and to provide a more realistic [albeit grim] representation," writes Andrew.

Angel Genares' painting portrays the infamous "Iron Butterfly" Imelda Marcos, wife of the Filipino dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Angel has painted Imelda surrounded by her shoe collection (she was reputed to have amassed 3,000 pairs): "The shoes represent the power and freedom she possessed despite the state of poverty and corruption in the Philippines," writes Angel.

Ben Plumer's piece, which was outside the gallery, was a truly collaborative effort. He built a wall. Chip Roberts from Facilities, who is the great grandson of the mason who came from Italy to build Founders Hall many decades ago, taught him how to mix mortar and lay brick, and Curtis Marsh (also a Facilities employee) helped build the platform it rests on and transported the wall, which weighed at least half a ton, by backhoe, to where it sits in front of the O'Brien Arts Center.

Grace Gahagan, an accomplished musician, constructed a viola out of insulation foam and adorned it with a beautiful fire pattern. "I wanted to portray the viola in a new way," she explains. "Everyone should experience the feeling of walking into a music store and seeing that one gorgeous electric guitar hanging on the wall. Even if you don't play, you have an urge to grab and play it."

Nancy Holmes' painting is a hilarious personification of the Swine Flu as a Godzilla-Hulk monster chasing the viewer, while Jordan Gowen makes a mockery of junk food advertisements in his piece. Caitlin Forstheofel's piece, "Loss of Innocence," comments on the effects of a surplus and speed-obsessed culture on childhood by depicting a Candyland haunted by black candy-canes. Kaley Hanrahan also explores the possibility that young people are growing up too fast: her piece, "Sunday Morning," depicts a child reading the paper with a cup of coffee.

Photography majors Liza Scher, Kelvin Green, Danielle Montanez, Evan Stillings and Olivia McGiff all exhibited their "sense of self" projects, series of images exploring "how we see ourselves and understand ourselves."

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