



NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

The Art World of Willard Alternative High School March 23 - April 22, 2012 Lela Autio Education Gallery

Missoula, MT / January 9, 2012 / Missoula Art Museum (MAM) / Every year, MAM selects a local high school to feature in the Lela Autio Education Gallery. These exhibitions showcase the creative efforts of our community's young artists as well as demonstrating the dedication, resilience, and hard work of the Missoula School District's art teachers. This year, the students of Willard Alternative High School will grace the walls of our education gallery with an assortment of their creative outpouring.

Gwen Hoppe who has taught at Willard for many years wrote the following essay to express her observation of the school's art programming:

The art from Willard Alternative High School reflects its diverse group of students. One hundred fifty students come to Willard from other Missoula public high schools with a wide range of backgrounds, interests, and skills. They often arrive with more than their share of life, challenges but soon adapt to the family-like setting and take responsibility for their education. The classes are smaller and teachers are able to adapt to the individual needs, helping students to find and develop their talents.

In the two Introduction to Art classes students explore a variety of materials, techniques, and concepts. The first trimester focuses on portraits, illustrated ceramic bowls, wire sculpture, jewelry, encaustic, and silk screening. Two Independent Studio Art classes offer students the freedom to work at their own pace. Some may focus on one project for weeks and others will create a new project every day. They may mix visual art with original guitar music to inform their work. Stephanie Wing offers two elective classes, Fiber Arts, and Gaudi Project for making public mosaics. Art is often incorporated across the curriculum; in Biology, students may be illustrating pollinator specific species, in Music Appreciation they may be creating album covers, and in Native Speaks, students have worked with traditional and contemporary art. Some students are not in any art classes but can be found creating art in the halls or sharing their work in the Willard Wire newspaper.

When students in the Independent Studio Art class were asked how they would describe the art and artists at Willard they said, "Passionate". "They put more effort in to show their individuality." "They have more freedom." "It's creative. You can't group them with one word."

Contact: For more information, please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406.728.0447, visit the MAM website at www.missoulaartmuseum.org or contact Renee Taaffe, Education Curator, renee@missoulaartmuseum.org, 406.728.0447 x228.

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About MAM: FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. The Missoula Art Museum strives to engage artists and audience in the creative exploration of contemporary art relevant to our community, state and region. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 10AM-5PM, Friday-Sunday, 10AM-3PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.