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# Academy of Visual & Performing Arts Culver City High School

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## Two AVPA Art Students Semifinalist in Music Center Awards

Culver City, CA, February 27, 2006

Culver City High School and Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) students Benjamin Hersh and Ricardo Ibarra were selected as two of the fifteen semifinalists in the Music Center's Spotlight Awards in the Visual Arts. Their entries were recognized out of the 400 applicants in the two-dimensional design category. The semifinalists have the opportunity of exhibiting their work at a major gallery. This year, it's at Bobbie Greenfield Gallery at Bergamot Station. The opening reception at the gallery will be on March 19th from 2:00-5:00 p.m.



Kristine Hatanaka, the director of AVPA's art program, is pleased that her students have received this recognition. According to Hatanaka, "This is Ricardo's first year for being recognized as a semi-finalist in this competition and the second year in a row for Ben. As I teacher, I can't help being gratified by their accomplishments."

The Music Center Spotlight Awards program is a nationally-acclaimed recognition and scholarship program for Southern California high school performing and visual artists. Launched as part of the Music Center's WinterFest in 1988, the program became an annual spring event in 1990. Currently 1,500 students compete for more than \$70,000 in prize money.

As an applicant for the Spotlight Award, the students supplied a reproduction of their artwork which was evaluated by professionals in their arts discipline. These two students and the other applicants had the opportunity to attend Master Classes taught by leading professionals in their field as well as to participate in a guided museum tour.

The semi-finalists will interview with a panel of expert judges in March. During this interview, the two CCHS students will present up to three finished pieces of artwork as well as portfolios and sketchbooks. Judges will select a first and second place finalist in each category and honorable mentions to be announced at the Gallery Awards Reception. The artwork will also be displayed at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion during the Spotlight Awards Final Concert.

According to Tony Spano, AVPA's Executive Director, "These students' talent and accomplishments makes us all very proud to have them as students in the Academy."

The Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) at Culver City High School offers a comprehensive arts curriculum after regular school hours for students who are committed to excellence in Art, Film, Theatre, Dance, and Music. Established in 1996, AVPA enjoys tremendous support from the community as well as from Sony Pictures Entertainment and other design, recording, and theatre companies in the area. For more information about the Academy, go to [www.avpa.org](http://www.avpa.org) or contact Tony Spano at 310-842-4200 6094 or x6009.

**Photo caption:**

(L-R) Ricardo Ibarra and Benjamin Hersh