
Academy of Visual & Performing Arts

Culver City High School

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AVPA Artists Win Recognition

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In a ceremony on February 11th at OTIS College of Art and Design, the winners of the Regional Scholastic Arts & Writing Awards competition were recognized for their achievements. Several art students from Culver City High School's Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) received awards and their artwork was displayed at the Bolsky Gallery at OTIS College.

CCHS senior Noel Ekker won a Gold Key award, the highest level award, for his drawing. Because of this award, Ekker's work will now be considered in the Scholastic Arts & Writing Awards national competition. He could also receive a scholarship. Ekker wasn't the only winner, though. Both Arthur Wong and Lexi Vilaivongs won Silver Key awards. Lexi Vilaivongs also won an Honorable Mention, as did Shelly Han and Joey Sanchez.



At the ceremony, a beaming Ekker was also awarded a full scholarship for summer art classes at OTIS, although he humbly told AVPA's co-director, Kristine Hatanaka, "I think they gave me the summer scholarship by mistake."

Hatanaka, who also runs AVPA's art department, replied. "Of course they didn't, Noel!" She encourages her students to take every opportunity to showcase their skills – opportunities like these highly competitive Scholastic Arts Awards. According to Hatanaka, "I'm always proud of the talent and creativity of my students. It's very gratifying for me to see them receive the recognition of a national competition like this. And just looking at their faces when they win something like this, I can see it makes them happy as well."

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards have celebrated 80 years of identifying and documenting the outstanding achievements of young artists and writers in the visual and literary arts. Since 1923, 12 million students have participated, 2 million young artists and writers have been recognized, and \$20 million in awards and scholarships have been made available. Each year, 250,000 students in grades 7 through 12 participate in the competition.

The Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) at Culver City High School has been inspiring and empowering students to build a compassionate, creative community through innovative and challenging arts education since 1996. AVPA enjoys tremendous support from Sony Pictures Entertainment and other area businesses as well as from the Culver City community. For more information about the Academy, go to avpa.org or contact Tony Spano at 310-842-4200 x6094 or Kristine Hatanaka at 310-842-4200 x6001.

Photo caption:

Silver Key winner Noel Ekker with his entry at the OTIS College Bolsky Gallery.

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