Student's passion for art tells senior project story

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

The brochure advertising Marina Bakhmutska's first art show gave visitors a warm "Welcome to Developing Dreams".

Arranged in a circular fashion, they greeted guests who attended the Harrison High School senior's show May 15. It featured more than 60 pieces of two- and three-dimensional art work – paintings, drawings and ceramics representing about three years of effort.

Bakhmutska's lengthy senior project had all the organization and preparation of a professional art show.

It contained both her self-portraits, portraits of her friends and of her mother at age 18. "They were just sitting there, so I sketched them," Bakhmutska said.

Animals and dragons are also part of the exhibit.

"I love horses but I never get a chance to ride. Bakhmutska said. "To make up for that I draw them. I like dragons because I can make them any shape or size."

In preparing for her show, Bakhmutska developed lists she checked more than twice. She obtained frames, mats, glass, hangers, fabric for the tables and finished some artwork. All exhibits were titled.

She even provided hors d'oevres for her guests.

"It was a lot of work," Bakhmutska said. "I thought, 'What would it take to make a great show?'"

She carefully selected her music. "I went through my CD collection of soundtracks and picked those which gave a *magical sense*," Bakhmutska said.

She also included Japanese manga style comic book characters.

Bakhmutska patterned her invitation after a professional invitation used by her brother, Dmitriy, for his wedding last August. "They were very pretty," she said.

She credited a number of people including Harrison art teachers Kimmi Dukes and Bobby Kelly.

When Bakhmutska emigrated with her family from the Ukraine six years ago, she started attending East Middle School.

"We won a green card in 1996 in a lottery," explained her mother, Victoria. "We wanted to start a new life. Marina is a very talented girl and very hard working."

When she was a little girl, her father, Illya, drew her attention to different paintings and sculptures. Neither parent is an artist.

"I just like art," Illya said.

Now the family's living room is filled with Bakhmutska's artwork.

Bakhmutska plans to attend Wayne State University where she will study biology. She hopes to do research or genetic engineering. Art, however, will remain a part of her life.

"What's amazing is her organization," said teacher Laura Sparrow. "Everything here is hers."

Sparrow was particularly drawn to a painting called "After Hours." The amusing scene features a sign, "Please don't disturb the artwork." After the museum closes, the creatures in the artwork come alive and jump out of the paintings.

Bakhmutska's senior project is part of Sparrow's advanced placement English class. The senior project concept has been controversial this year in the Farmington school district.

A variety of reasons, including parent concerns about the time involved, resulted in the senior project being piloted as a separate class which begins next fall. It will be an elective rather than part of a mandatory graduation requirement.

Sparrow needs few words to explain the benefits of a senior project. Bakhmutska's passion for art tells the whole story.

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BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Harrison senior Marina Bakhmutska displays a ceramic titled Tiger's Eye. The gallery exhibit of her high school art work is her senior project.

Training slated for center

The Holocaust Memorial Center will begin its annual training session for individuals wishing to serve as docents.

The new facility is expected to open on Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills this fall. The orientation session for interested adults with daytime hours to spare will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday, June 25 in the HMC's present location, 6602 West Maple Road in West Bloomfield.

Master docents, as well as new candidates, are invited to attend the meeting.

Docents will learn to guide groups on walking tours of the HMC, explaining the exhibits and interpreting the history and lessons of the Holocaust. A syllabus for the new campus is being prepared and will be distributed at the orientation session.

Because of the addition of two new entities, namely the International Institute of the Righteous and the Museum of European Jewish History, this year's training session will include two survey courses on Jewish History, one of which will be taught by Rabbi Charles H. Rosenveig, the HMC's founder. A second instructor will be named soon.

HMC board member and veteran docent, Judy Miller, is expected to continue in her role as coordinator of the docent training program.

Pre-registration is necessary for those new to the HMC docent program. For information, call Selma Silverman at the HMC, (248) 661-0840.

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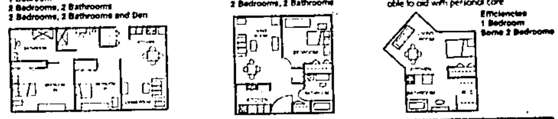

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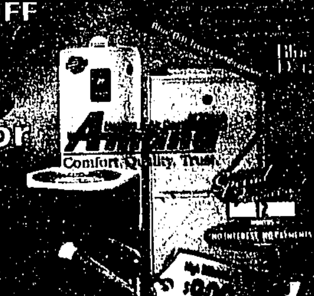

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