

# JN LONG CULTURAL ARTS CENTER Highlighting talent



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JN Long Cultural Arts Center Executive Director Brittany Lewis points out details in submitted weaved art projects from local students. Those, paintings, photography and more make up the Youth Art Show.

## JN Long exhibit showcases young artists

**BY MATT SMITH**  
MSMITH@TRCLE.COM

It's growing, the JN Long Cultural Arts Center's Youth Art Show.

"In 2021 we got 43 entries," JN Long Executive Director Brittany Lewis said. "In 2022 there were 118 and this year we got 205 entries so this is the biggest one we've had so far."

Covid canceled 2020's planned exhibit.

The free exhibit, which runs through March 25 showcases the talents of student throughout Johnson County.

"It's open to all students first through

12th grades from all Johnson County schools and home school students," Lewis said. "We reached out the the art teachers and administrators at all the schools and got response from them, a lot of home schooled students and Camp Fire USA."

Organizers hope to see increased participation from students and the number of schools represented in future years as well as more public attendance.

Increased opportunity for budding artists couple with a desire to celebrate homegrown creativity, Lewis said.

"Unfortunately, you kind of see art

pushed out of schools here and there," Lewis said. "What I love about the Youth Art Show is that it allows young people encouragement to make art and have their art shown publicly. And we love that we have the space here to showcase that and all the creativity."

Charlotte Lawson, president of the Johnson County Art Guild, agreed.

"The benefit of having JN Long available for school kids to show there art is that it gives them self confidence and encouragement to continue with

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their art through having a space available to see their art exhibited," Lawson said. "It's important I think for kids who have a talent and passion for art to have those avenues to get their work out there. I think also with that outlet and the Youth Art Show it gives them purpose and goals to work toward through their art."

Grandview ISD art teacher Gia Callaway concurred.

"For students especially usually there's not a lot of outlet opportunities for them to get their artwork out there in front of the public," Callaway said.

Several Grandview elementary, middle and high school students submitted works making GVISD the largest participant of this year's show.

"I submitted works done in class that the students gave their permission to submit for the show," Callaway said. "This is my first year teaching at Grandview. I

came from a district that has a lot of schools and a big art program. GISD doesn't have a district art show so we're very grateful for the opportunity JN Long brings to showcase our student's talents."

As are her students, Callaway said.

"I asked students why it was important for them to get their artworks in the show," Callaway said. "They said because they're proud of it and the work they put into their art and that they wanted other people to see it."

Cleburne resident Emily Harvey felt much the same. Harvey's 14-year-old daughter, Emma Harvey, is a Grace Christian Educator Homeschool Co-op student as well as a member of the Johnson County Art Guild.

Emma Harvey's of a mountain lion captured mid snarl hangs among the exhibit's many works. Emma Harvey also painted a picture depicting one of the "Twelve Days of Christmas," a Johnson County Art Guild project exhibited

last December at the Cleburne Public Library.

"Emma started showing us her artwork when she was about 11," Emily Harvey said. "We were really impressed wondering how she even knew how to do that. Of course, as a parent we fueled that by getting her art supplies and canvasses and all. The next things we knew, she was just doing it."

Emily Harvey likewise expressed appreciation for the Youth Art Show.

"Emma loves nature and animals," Emily Harvey said. "That's what most of her art is. She loves to show her art and get thrilled when people love it as much as she does."

The theme of this year's show remained open, allowing young artists to follow their muse.

"We have everything to drawings, paintings, photography, weaving to a 3-D block of wood made out of paper," Lewis said. "It's just a big mix and I love that aspect of it."

Cards adjacent the individual works identify the artist, title of the work,

medium used and artist's grade.

Placement of the works flow from first graders to high school seniors.

"I wasn't here for last year's Youth Art Show so I wasn't sure what to expect from the submissions this year," Lewis said. "I was just absolutely blown away. The level of art, not just the high school students, but the lower grades too is just amazing to see."

Among the elementary school level submissions hang two dinosaur drawings.

"I mean most kids at this age level are naming their artwork what it is," Lewis said. "Things like cat, dragon, shoe. This kid came in and named his pieces 'Feast in the Sky' and 'Behemoth.' This kid is going places."

Pointing out other pieces throughout the exhibit, Lewis continued to praise the originality and diversity on display.

Every year the submissions excite and surprise, Lawson said.

"It just amazes me the creativity of so many of

our children throughout the county," Lawson said. "It also indicates that we have some really good teachers out there encouraging them and helping teach and direct them."

Some of the works are for sale, Lewis added, with such decisions being left to the individual students.

First, second and third place prizes will be awarded during a March 5 reception.

"That will be by a panel of nine judges," Lewis said. "Three from the art guild, three from the camera club and three from the pottery classes. That way we get a variety of eyes and inputs on the works."

Students will be judged in groups of first through fourth grade, fifth through eighth and ninth through twelfth.

Lewis and Lawson encouraged interested artistic students to begin planning for next year's Youth Art Show exhibit but added that opportunities exist between now and then.

"Mary Parvin who used to teach art at Cleburne High School teaches classes here now for children ages 3 to 12," Lewis said. "We also hold summer camps where are current teachers and volunteers do small workshops throughout the entire summer."

Classes in art, and other activities, are available for adults as well, Lewis said.

"Yes," Lewis said. "Our next exhibit after this is the Peoples' Choice Show. That's open to members of the art guild as well as anyone in the community to submit artworks of any type of medium. Then members of the local community will come in and vote on their favorites. We also plan to put in a photograph exhibit in our other gallery space, which we hope to open next week."

The JN Long Cultural Arts Center is at 425 Granbury St. in Cleburne. For information on classes, clubs, exhibits and activities, visit [cleburneculturalarts.org](http://cleburneculturalarts.org) or call 817-641-4908.