Local art students will be featured at annual art exhibition

By Aaron Rubin
Standard Correspondent

Woodstock Union High School art students Charlotte Nunan and Jakub Marzec are being honored at the Ava Gallery and Art Center in Lebanon, N.H. on Jan. 19 as part of its 16th Annual High School Exhibition, along with other regional high school students nominated by their teachers for their accomplishments in art.





Left, the highly textured subject of "Ken" is a symbol of childhood and the longing for a carefree time, said artist Charlotte Nunan. She was inspired by French expressionist works in her creation. Courtesy of Charlotte Nunan **Right, Jakub Marzec's image of the Bjarnarfoss Waterfall in Iceland speaks to his interest in nature photography and interest in the shape of natural landscapes.** Courtesy of Jakub Marzec

Charlotte Nunan

Nunan is being honored for her acrylic painting entitled "Ken," featuring a highly-textured teddy bear with bright red shorts as its subject. The painting is one out of 15 total works Nunan will have to complete in her Advanced Placement (AP) Art class under the theme of "sustained investigation."

"Ken," named after a teddy bear Nunan had as a child, is one of those creations that reflects upon her childhood and the transition into an 18-year-old adult. Nunan says she thinks that a teddy bear like "Ken" is "a symbol of childhood," indicative of a time when life was not as orderly as that of an adult.

"Every time I look back, I kind of have a sense of longing; I wish that I could go back and be as carefree as I was," said Nunan.

The heavy textures of Ken's fur in the painting was inspired by works of the French expressionist movement Nunan studied in an art history class last year. Those works feature similar qualities that bring painted images to life, something Nunan says she wanted to capture herself.



Charlotte Nunan

"I want to have more movement and flow in my work and that's kind of what 'Ken' has. He has a lot of texture and brushstrokes, and that's what I was [drawn to]. That's an inspiration. That's what I'm trying to achieve," Nunan explained.

The other 15 works by Nunan under the theme of "sustained investigation" include one she is currently working on that is a spin on self-portraiture that also reflects on the transition from childhood to adulthood.

"It's a photo of me when I was younger and plopped her in the middle of an office cubicle," said Nunan. "When you grow up you don't feel like you're an adult yet. You still feel like you're a child even though you're working an adult job, and that's kind of what that one is."

Nunan said she is "really happy that I could share my work" in the exhibition and that it is a "big" accomplishment to have "Ken" featured at the gallery.

"I don't know how to describe this, but it's like it's an achievement. It's like, 'Oh, I've done good,'" Nunan concluded.

Jakub Marzec

The work by Marzec that will be featured in the exhibition is a photograph titled "Up the Mountain." The subject of the image is the Bjarnarfoss Waterfall that is located on the Snaefellnes Peninsula in western Iceland. Marzec captured the wallpaper-like image on a trip to the Nordic country with his friend and parents, who are featured at the fore of the photograph. He was captivated by the natural landscape and the paths by which people could take to reach the summit.

"I really liked how your eyes went up the mountain slowly following the path and the stream that was coming from the waterfall. You could imagine how the people were walking up there" said Marzec. "Iceland is very beautiful. I really liked going there, it has lots of great waterfalls."

Marzec took a few shots of the waterfall from different distances and angles, but it was when he saw his parents enter the frame that he became inspired. "I saw my parents walking up the mountain, I'm like, 'This looks like an amazing photograph,' and I took the photo and it came out very well," he said.

Photography in general is where Marzec got his start in the arts, taking up the practice in middle school.

"I didn't really have any interest in it earlier, but I knew right away once I started doing photography that I really did like it. It's something that I've liked ever since I started doing it," he said.



Jakub Marzec

Nature photography in particular is a style to which Marzec is drawn and is "usually what I take photos of," he said. While close-ups of subjects like flowers or other smaller biology is his primary focus within that genre, photographs like "Up the Mountain" still find a place in his portfolio.

"I mainly focus on flowers and macrophotography but I do sometimes do landscape," he added.

Marzec points to a floral photograph he snapped as a freshman as one of his favorite works.

"I don't know how to describe it. I put the flower in such a good frame. It's one of my favorites, to be honest, of all time that I've taken. It's in my top three, for sure," he said.

Marzec is "very grateful" to be included in the Ava exhibition and views it similarly to Nuna as an achievement. "It's one of my greatest accomplishments. I'm thankful that my teachers selected me to be in the contest."

The opening reception and awards celebration at Ava Gallery and Arts Center takes place on Friday, Jan. 19, from 5-7 p.m. The awards presentation will take place at 6 p.m.