

Creating Art Feeds the Brain and Fuels Confidence

At Independent Day School-Corbett Campus, where all students participate in the visual arts, the annual spring art show includes more than 500 works, representing every IDSer.



Fifth graders Catie Clark and Emma Friedman admire a variety of paintings created with mixed media. Middle schoolers Matheus Caldeira, Calvin Windisch, and Garrett Anderson are proud of the impressionistic mural they produced as a team.

May 23, 2011 (TAMPA, Fla.) – Research supports numerous benefits for children that come from studying the arts.

By learning and practicing in the visual and performing arts, the brain actually rewires itself to make more and stronger neurological connections. This can result in improved brain function, stronger problem solving and critical-thinking skills, and higher standardized test scores.

Yet, strolling through the 2011 Spring Art Show in the Farish Center at Independent Day School-Corbett Campus, it's easy to lose sight of brain research, as one becomes enthralled by the creative use of line, color, shape and texture, and captivated by the uniqueness of each child represented through ceramics, painting and sculpture.

Variety in form, technique, media, and theme abounds. There's the beauty of the natural world depicted through the ancient Japanese art of *gyotaku*, or fish printing, and the energy of Alexander Calder-like wire sculptures of figures in motion. The whimsy of mythological creatures is depicted through mixed media. And painstakingly decorated pottery, etched using a traditional *sgraffito* technique, shows intricate lines and detail.

Developed and presented by IDS art teachers Susan Bossard, Debbie Kerr, and Lori Hohmann, the annual art show celebrates the culmination of the school's year-long arts curriculum. It showcases every IDS student by exhibiting an individual work created by each child, and also features several cooperative and team art projects.

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First graders Cade Panella (left photo) Rory Ferguson and Satty Bennett enjoy the variety of sculpture, ceramics, and paintings on display in the Farish Center during the annual Spring Art Show.

For the art teachers and the Parent Faculty Association volunteers who assist with set-up, the show involves days of carefully matting and preparing for display more than 500 individual pieces.

“It’s exhilarating when the children come in and see their work professionally displayed like in a real museum,” said Kerr. “It makes all the work worthwhile.”

According to the teachers, students who are provided with the opportunity to create art are able to make valuable real-life connections to both academics and to life.

“The process of creating art is a way for students to come to deeper understandings about many other disciplines – math, science, history,” said Kerr. “They can also gain personal insight into themselves and into life.”

For example, while creating and painting an individual ceramic sarcophagus, students learned about ancient Egyptian culture and burial customs. Primary students were introduced to mathematical concepts including radial symmetry when they created mandalas. And middle schoolers explored the history and meaning of gargoyles in gothic architecture while experimenting with hand-building ceramic techniques.

In addition to building stronger neurological connections, as well as connections to other academic disciplines, IDS art teachers say that having the opportunity to express themselves creatively enables students to develop something else that is fundamental to success: confidence.

“Giving students true creative freedom empowers them,” said Hohmann. “Knowing that their work is valued and respected gives them the confidence to put their imaginations onto paper.”

“Every year, it is exciting for us as teachers to see the looks of delight and personal accomplishment on their faces when they find their art among the displays,” said Bossard.

“All children benefit from having the visual arts in their lives.”

Founded in 1968, Independent Day School-Corbett Campus is a fully accredited, nonsectarian private school located on Orange Grove Drive in northwest Hillsborough County with over 500 students from PreK3 through 8th grade. At IDS, all children experience the International Baccalaureate Programme in a highly academic and nurturing environment focused on excellence and excitement in learning. IDS-CC has become recognized as an exemplary school with over 6,500 visitors observing and learning from IDS-CC teachers. For more information, visit www.idsy.es.com or contact the Admissions Office at 813-961-3087 for a personal tour.

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