

Jewish Federation exhibit features local talent and Israeli artists

For one expert art juror, this is an opportunity to select and exhibit more than 50 thought-provoking creations for the public eye.

For a number of local artists, it is their time to shine through design.

Hidden talents became realized recently in the Heidi Gallery of the Jewish Service for the Developmentally Disabled (JSDD) center in Livingston. Hailing mostly from Morris and Essex counties, 74 artists submitted 100 entries for exhibition consideration to the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ art committee as part of a celebratory centennial year honoring the history and leadership of the community.

Exhibit co-chair Ann Schaffer was delighted at the response to the request for artistic submissions from so many of those interested in sharing their stories and traditions inspired by the local Jewish community and keeping within the theme of “community connections.”

“I was really pleasantly surprised at the high quality of the work,” she said. “I just never expected it to be quite like this.”

Besides the local talent, Israeli artists are also featured, alongside those with and without disabilities — from middle school age to adult. Each of the artists are showcasing their work in various media such as sculptures, paintings, water color and photography. It is this blend of varying medium materials that only enhances the gallery’s extensive display.

“It’s more interesting to mix media if you can, so that each medium has its own personality and shines,” Schaffer said.

A veteran collector, Schaffer has appreciated the art world since her childhood. Growing up in Manhattan, she often visited the numerous galleries and museums and later took classes on art collecting. She was a teacher, consultant and advisor of contemporary art and today is a respected juror scrutinizing pieces for exhibits both large and small. She is a trustee of Independent Curators International and serves on several boards including the Montclair Art Museum; co-chairs the Guggenheim Photography Council; is a former trustee of The Museum of Modern Art and current Honorary Chair



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of the MoMA Contemporary Arts Council; and co-chairs the National Advisory Council at the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery of Skidmore College.

The relatively new Heidi Gallery at JSDD seeks to foster a fully inclusive community in the arts as well as arts education year-round in order “to encourage, challenge, educate and expand perspectives” according to the organization’s website.

Each artist showcased in the gallery tells their story in graphic elements with unique pieces that will delight both the casual observer and those with a keen eye for artistic talent. You might even be amazed at the maturity of some of the pieces which belie the creator’s age.

“This is an exciting event and people are going to be surprised with the quality (of the

artwork),” Schaffer said. “It’s a wide range.”

Treat yourself to a gallery visit any weekday and explore the many wonderful entries. Plus, if you like what you see and think it will add a little something to your home or office space, all of the art is available for sale.

You can stop in and take a leisurely stroll through the gallery enjoying the creative endeavors of these exceptional artisans any Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.* and at the closing reception on April 14 from noon to 3 p.m.

For a list of exhibiting artists, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/HeidiArtExhibit>

The gallery is located at: 310 Eisenhower Parkway in Livingston.

* Hours are extended until 9 p.m. on March 28, April 8 and April 10.

— Debra Stevko Miller



Ann Schaffer, exhibit co-chair