



‘15 Paintings in 30 days’ attracts Gallup’s best

GallupArts challenged 28 local artists to create 15 paintings in 30 days. Called *15 in 30*, the challenge was an invitation to local artists to create 15 original, 2D artworks within a 30 day time frame, funded by a grant from
New Mexico Arts
. Opening night was Feb. 9, when area artists showcased their works, ranging from fabric and pottery to landscapes and portraits.

High school senior Bailey Pete loves the idea of displaying her portraiture. Her medium is

acrylic. Pete says she works in sets of series that connect to her life. “Everything I do here is connected to me on a level of family members, friends, and those I look up to. The paintings are all connected and that was what I was going for.” Starting from a black canvas, Pete begins her paintings with the lightest color, then adds the darker tones.

Another artist who took up the challenge was Shawn Ahkeah, whose paintings consist of his interpretation of life. Using acrylic as his medium, Ahkeah adds water to his paintings of the Navajo culture. What stands out about Ahkeah’s work is his backgrounds – all from the area of the Navajo Nation and the Southwest. “Mesas and local scenery are what I love to paint,” he says. “When you look at my work, you see things like a story and you read into the artwork.”

As people made their way around the gallery, art lovers struggled to decide what to buy. Kinship was evident among the artists and onlookers.

Artist Jerry Brown says it was easy for him to create the number of pieces for the challenge and that it was exciting working with different mediums. Already painting at the age of three, Brown says in using acrylics, he felt proportions and style fit together smoothly in his paintings of various birds.

“I had fun doing this, I chose birds to challenge myself because of the overlapping of feathers and how they’re just being birds,” he said, laughing. “From starting out on coloring books as a child and then being pushed to be an independent artist is awesome.”

Brown says he was fortunate to have various Native American teachers helping him along the way.

Eleven-year-old Mary Brown was a crowd pleaser as she eagerly talked of her work and the simple joy of just painting. Working in a medium of collages, Brown says, “I did collages because they are fun, and I learned from my dad and want to be a painter someday.”

With the majority the artists beating the challenge, one artist, Tera Selleck of Gallup, didn’t quite get all her work in. Using watercolors as her medium, Selleck paints scenes of nature, flowers,

and trees. She managed to complete six paintings. Of the other participants, Selleck said, “Every one of these artists got their work in time, so I feel like I’m in a room full of giants.”

For more information visit: FB@art123Gallery or visit www.galluparts.org

By Dee Velasco
For the Sun