

ART around PALO ALTO

CELEBRATING THE TOWN'S BEAUTIFUL AND DIVERSE ART

Living in future-focused Palo Alto, the city's beautiful art is often overlooked. This small town holds vibrant artists who showcase their works all around the community.

One of the most popular art exhibits in Palo Alto is the annual Great Glass Pumpkin Patch, which attracts thousands of people. The event showcases the work of glass artists and features over 10,000 one-of-a-kind glass pumpkins.

Paly junior Beck Lynn holds fond childhood memories of this Palo Alto tradition. Lynn admires the open and dedicated Palo Alto community.

"Lots of people appreciate the hard work that people in Palo Alto put into their art," Lynn said.

As director of the Public Arts Program for the City of Palo Alto, Elise DeMarzo works with artists to showcase their work in the community.

"If there is a new fire station or garage, one percent of that budget goes towards integration of public art," DeMarzo said. "We also commission temporary works throughout the city, including our Art Festival, which we did last October."

Paly senior and Palo Alto Teen Art council co-president Rebecca Helft's goal is to bring together different teen artists into one space.

"Our mission is to create a place for teens to experience art, whether that be performing at open mics or painting a mural together," Helft said. "We want to make art accessible to everyone."

The rise of technology and innovation has transformed the art scene. Many well-established artists are adapting to

the introduction of technology in art. For Palo Alto artists Ashlie Benton and Flo de Bretagne, online websites and social media platforms are the perfect outlets to showcase and sell their art.

"[We're]lucky to live 21st century where social media has a big role to play for artists because it really changed the life of art," de Bretagne said. "It's a great way to connect directly with people who appreciate my art."

Growing up with an artist father, from a young age, Benton has fully been immersed in art. Benton encourages reflection with

her audiences.

"I would like to inspire people to be curious about their internal world, how they exist in the world and how they relate and connect with other people, themselves, the context of the culture, the nature of the culture, the pressures and the judgments," Benton said.

According to DeMarzo, working in the field of public art is vastly different from working for a museum or art gallery.

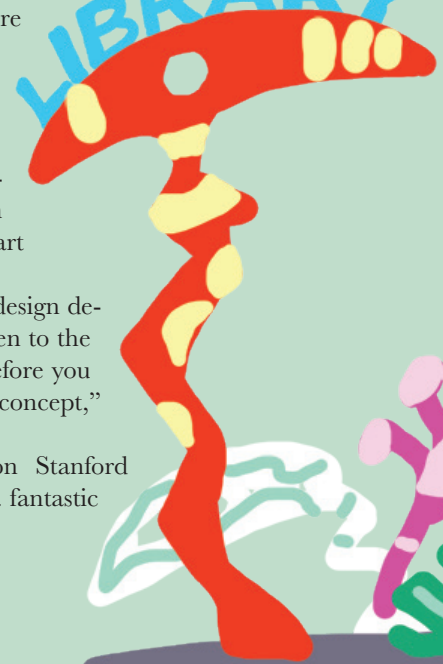
"When you go through design development, you want to listen to the needs of the community before you even start coming up with a concept," DeMarzo said.

In the new hospital on Stanford Campus, the halls feature a fantastic

"WE WANT TO MAKE ART ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE."

REBECCA HELFT, 12

LIBRARY



art collection from local artists, including some of Benton's work.

Benton appreciates the recognition Stanford gives to local artists, which builds up the local community.

"Stanford has done a stunning job of realizing the value of art for people who are sick or stressed out," Benton said. "Family members and patients are able to walk down the hallways and see something that is beautifully made, [which] is comforting."

DeMarzo finds that artists in the Bay Area, especially in Palo Alto, are a joy to work with.

"Many Palo Alto artists were not on our radars before," DeMarzo said. "It's been really great working with so many artists and creatives from Palo Alto, who are dipping their toe in the water of the field of public art."

The City of Palo Alto must ensure that their public art can be enjoyed by as many people as possible, and need to direct their pieces to various audiences.

"Whether it's historic Trompe-l'Œil Greg Brown murals, the new media piece in the lobby of City Hall or giant 40 foot climbing poles in front of the Junior Museum, all art pieces are tailored to a different audience, depending on the users of that space," DeMarzo said.

People have many pre-conceived notions about artists, such as having a minor source of income. However, de Bretagne is living proof that such notions are false.

"If you are passionate and you are ready to work hard, there are so many things you can do," de Bretagne said. "You're not going to starve and you're not going to be bored. I have to be unique and pick-and-choose what project I want to work on because there are so many opportunities."

The fear surrounding choosing the path as an artist can be reduced with a different mindset.

"When I was in school, I met with a very famous artist and he said you need some talent and you need some hard work," de Bretagne said. "I think that hard work is really [important because] if you just rely on your talent nothing will happen."

De Bretagne has experience working with people of various ages. When working with

college students, she asked them where they envisioned themselves after graduation.

"Their main dream was to find the perfect gallery that would represent them," de Bretagne said. "I'm very surprised. I mean, if that happens, great, but I think that's not what their main goal should be."

For Helft, art holds a special place in her heart.

"[Art] adds beauty in places that maybe are not so beautiful just by nature, which makes the atmosphere much more pleasant," Helft said.

Art has the power to make change in the community.

"I call myself a maker of dreams because I feel that as an artist, I can make dreams happen on a canvas," de Bretagne said.

With art spread throughout the community in both public and private sectors, de Bretagne's art impacts an extensive audience.

"I hear all the time how much my painting has impacted people," de Bretagne said. "How they make [people] smile, how they inspire [people], how they show resilience."

For aspiring artists who want to showcase their work, De-

Marzo's biggest tip is to follow other artists on social media for inspiration or opportunities.

"You get on the radar of directors and you can find out about [an] open call," DeMarzo said. "Subscribe to their newsletters and get

informed about what resources are around you."

Although the art Helft primarily participates in is theater, she also values the fine arts that are displayed around the city.

"I just really love how many murals and communal art projects there are throughout Palo Alto," Helft said. "They add a unifying sense of community to this space."

The community that Helft has found through theater has made her gain a greater appreciation for art.

"Being an artist really gives you an opportunity to express yourself emotionally and gain a greater understanding of not just yourself, but other people too," Helft said.

In Palo Alto, creativity is often overlooked, and subjects such as math and science are more valued.

"I think sometimes people, particularly in Palo Alto, really box themselves into their identity of being an athlete or being someone in STEM," Helft said. "But Palo Alto does a really great job of making sure everyone can access art, and I wish more people took advantage of that."

Helft values the funding that the City of Palo Alto puts into art spaces. "This [funding] makes it a lot more accessible for people to begin interacting with art," Helft said. "Art in Palo Alto is meant for everybody."

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FLO DE BRETAGNE, ARTIST

