

Petite Picassos gather at Civic Center



Evergreen students, Mari Jeronimo Ramirez, left, Selena Montaño, Victor Alvarez Contreras, Kevin Major, Evergreen Librarian Courtney Morgan, and Piper Schauer admire each others work at the Evergreen Art Show.

by NATALIE JOHNSON

Students from Evergreen Elementary School gathered Friday to share their favorite work from this school year with their friends and the community.

“This is the culmination of their whole year,” said Joyce Jaime, Evergreen’s art teacher. “They need to see what a gallery feels like – it’s part of their standards for the year that they need to do a public exposition.”

Over the year, all Evergreen students spend time learning about everything from watercolor, to collage, to sewing in their art room, and get a chance to exhibit their favorite pieces at the Civic Center in May. In their art room, the students are free to create what they learned about in class, or whatever they feel that day, Jaime said.

“I have all 500 kids come through my classroom every eight days,” she said. “The art room is set up instead of a teacher

giving one whole lesson at a time, it’s set up in miniature studios – every child picks their own medium, every child picks their own materials, they’re responsible for their setup and they’re responsible for cleaning up when they’re through. They come up with amazing things.”

Some of those amazing things include designs with fabric from a student interested in fashion design, abstract designs and interpretations of other works of art, and construction projects from kindergarteners. Jaime simply beamed as she showed off her students’ hard work and artistic expression. Jaime said that while some students take hours, days, and even weeks to polish a very deliberate work of art, others accidentally create something very special. One student in particular tried to make a clay peace sign, but when it was in the kiln another project exploded and debris got stuck to her art.

“She came up and said, ‘something happened’... and I said, ‘I was going to tell you about that because kilns are very unpredictable and that’s part of learning about clay,’” Jaime said. “I asked, ‘what do you think about how it looks now?’ and she said it just looks all broken and then she got this look on her face and said, ‘it’s kind of like the world,’ and I thought ‘yes!’”

Still other students are “specialists,” Jaime said. “There’s a large shark contingency. You’ll see sharks all over the area – sharks are very big,” she said.

Throughout the day, every student from Evergreen also toured the exhibit. First they would frantically search for their own piece, then share it with their friends, then wander through the show looking at their peers’ work, Jaime said.

“It’s funny because when the kindergarteners and first graders came in, they walked through the door and you could just hear this collective ‘Wow,’” she said..

Jaime also asks her students to write artist statements about each of their pieces to explain what they were thinking as they created the painting, drawing, or sculpture on display.

“I have people that come in and look at the art and get lost in the artist statements – it’s really fun to watch people,” she said.

Despite the fact that Jaime works with these kids day in and day out, at the end of the day, she said she is still surprised and excited by what they create.

“When they’re together like that you see all the different kinds of things they come up with,” she said.