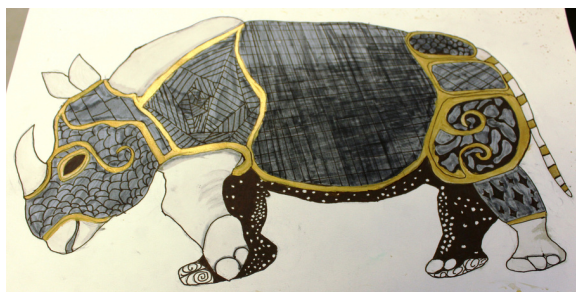
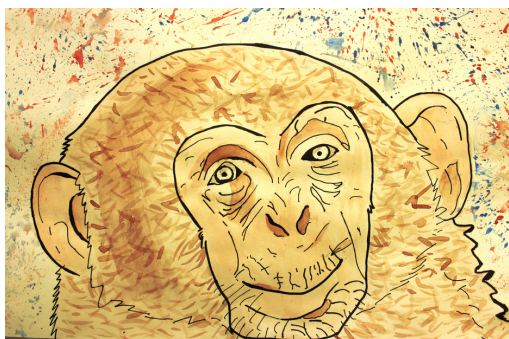


ART CLASSES EXPOSE CROCKETT STUDENTS' TALENT



Above: Rhino: By Lance Yearwood



Above: Chimpanzee: By Dempsie Nelson



Above: Green Deer: By Landon Franks

By Ron Barry

When you're a high school teacher, you can generally know that your students have received some type of preliminary training in your subject matter before they get to you.

Amber Graves doesn't always have that luxury.

Graves is Crockett County High School's art teacher, and when a student enrolls in one of her classes, she has no idea if they've been exposed to an "official" art course or not. Some of the elementary schools have it; some don't. So when she gets a student, the odds are that she is the first art "specialist" that student has encountered.

"It is always astounding to me how far these kids come in just a few months," Graves says. "Most of them draw either from natural talent or because parents or siblings have taught them. I wish there were more of an emphasis on art in the elementary schools, but we begin where we need to here."

One look around the hallways near her classroom or in the portfolio collections in the room itself will bring you to an obvious conclusion, however: There's plenty of talent at CCHS.

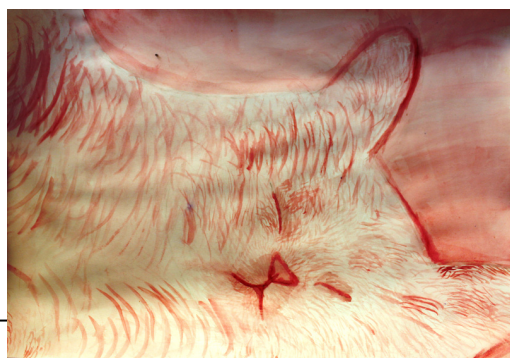
Graves tries to make the subject fun and makes an effort to tap into things that will spur the students' creativity, like a recent venture to make self-portraits in the style of animator and movie director Tim Burton, best known for Beetlejuice, Frankenweenie, Pee-Wee's Big Adventure, Edward Scissorhands, and The Nightmare Before Christmas. He's also directed a couple of Batman movies. Burton has a very distinct style and quickly captured the interest of the students in Graves's after-school Art Club, which meets every Wednesday afternoon.

"These kids are so shy about their accomplishments in art," Graves said. "They never think they are good enough. I want to show the public that they are."

The following examples should do just that...

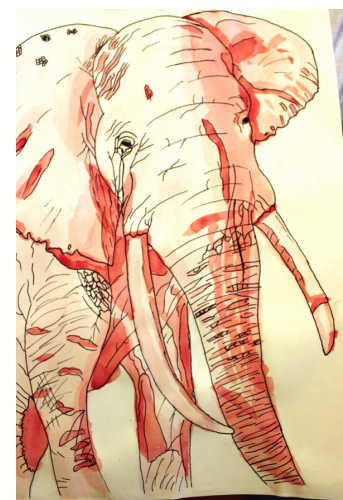


Above: Dog in Water: By Summer Ramey



Left: Cat: By Alejandra Leon

Right: Alpaca: By Kaylee Word



Above: Elephant: By Makenzi Rice



Above: Christmas Ornaments: Made By Dempse Nelson, Modeled By Kaitlyn Crocker



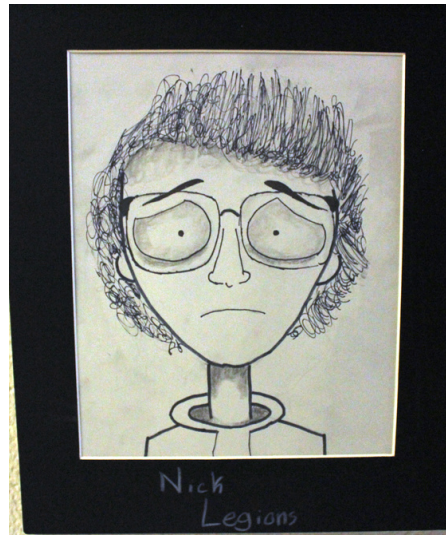
Above: Black dog: By Jake Brown



Above: Glass Deer: By Jordyn Maddox



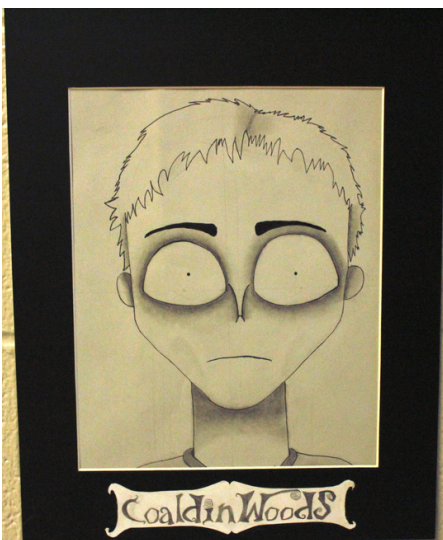
Above: Self-Portrait: By Bianca Crawford



Above: Self-Portrait: By Nick Legions



Above: Self-Portrait: By Phoenix Riggs



Above: Self-Portrait: By Coaldin Woods



Above: Fourth-block art class of Amber Graves works on final projects.